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OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY



EDITORS: THE DOMINICAN FATHERS OF THE PROVINCE OF ST. JOSEPH

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VOL. XV

JANUARY, 1952

No. 1

THE AUTHORITY OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS



RECENTLY Pope Pius XII, in the Encyclical *Humani Generis* of August 12, 1950 and in an Allocution delivered on September 17 of the same year and directed to those at the Third International Thomistic Congress held in Rome, seriously and repeatedly warned Catholic theologians and philosophers to abandon the vagaries of novel theology and philosophy infected with materialism, historicism, immanentism and existentialism. They were to direct their attention to the safe and sound doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas in which salvation and truth are found.

Pius X had done the same when Modernism became strong, especially in the Encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* of September 8, 1907. Likewise, Leo XIII, in an effort to turn the human mind from the errors of pantheism, rationalism, ontologism and extreme traditionalism, against which the Vatican Council had taken action, considered that there was no better

remedy at hand than to devote all his powers to restore, nurture, prescribe and urge the doctrine of the Angelic Master. For that reason he issued the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* on August 4, 1879, as well as many other documents.

From this evidence one fact clearly stands out: that in the judgment of the Holy See there is a remarkable force and power in the doctrine of St. Thomas for safeguarding faith and reason against the multiple deviations which afflict our age.

Just how great this power is and how serious the obligation of adhering to and following the commands and admonitions of the Holy See in this matter is, perhaps, not sufficiently clear to all. For this reason there is an evident need to discuss the doctrinal authority of St. Thomas Aquinas in the fields of philosophy and theology, together with the obligation which binds Catholic philosophers and theologians by precept of the Holy See to embrace and follow his authority.

In order that we may proceed without ambiguity in a matter of such moment, we must above all keep in view what strictly touches on our discussion, namely, the twin distinction of doctrinal authority. One aspect deals with the object or matter, and the other with the mode or form.

On the part of the *matter* there is one authority in *philosophical* science or in the order of truths which man can know by reason. There is another authority in *theological* science or in the order of truths exceeding the natural powers of human reason. This latter order of truth cannot be known unless it is revealed by God and accepted by faith.

On the part of the *form* the authority in each science, whether philosophical or theological, is twofold. One is intrinsic or *scientific* and is measured by the internal mental stature of the writer and the intrinsic doctrinal validity of his work. The other authority is extrinsic or *canonical* and is measured in a particular way by the approbation and commendation of the Teaching Church. We omit that merely human extrinsic authority which depends upon the evaluation of learned men.

Such canonical or ecclesiastical authority of St. Thomas or

of any other writer in the philosophical field should not be considered incongruous. For just as the power of the Church touches directly only spiritual things, but indirectly temporal things by reason of the spiritual, so the Teaching Authority of the Church indirectly and by way of consequence extends to philosophical science, though primarily and directly it is concerned only with supernatural and theological truths. As Pius XII explains:

Assuredly it is her task [the Teaching Authority of the Church] by divine institution, not only to protect and interpret the deposit of divinely revealed truth, but also to keep watch over the philosophical sciences themselves in order that Catholic dogmas may suffer no harm from erroneous opinions.¹

I

SCIENTIFIC AUTHORITY OF THE DOCTOR

1. *In Philosophical Science*

In speaking of the *intrinsic philosophical* authority of St. Thomas, beyond doubt we must note the following. The intrinsic doctrinal authority of any philosopher rests in its entirety on a double basis: the *person* or personal qualities which befit a good philosopher; and his *works*, in that they give evidence that his teaching is perennially true and unassailably valid.

Both of these apply perfectly to Aquinas. First, he possessed an abundance of all the personal qualities requisite for a good philosopher: a razor-keen mind, vivid memory, tireless effort, profound learning, purposeful diligence, purity of life, the cultivation and love of truth alone; there is no doubt that nature "wonderfully endowed him to be a philosopher," as Pius XI declared.²

There was no philosophical school known at that time, or indeed which possibly could be known, in whose philosophy he was not completely skilled. He fully understood the Greeks,

¹ Encyclical *Humani Generis*, AAS 42 (1950), 575.

² Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*, June 29, 1923, AAS 15 (1923), 318.

Latins, Jews, Arabs; yet at the same time he treated them with gentleness and understanding. He clearly saw that, as he himself said, "the study of philosophy is directed not at knowing what men have thought, but at knowing *what is actually the truth of things*."³ He adds: "to know what you may wish or understand does not belong to the perfection of my intellect, but only to know the truth in reality."⁴

He was accustomed to read everything with a mind undisturbed and free of prejudice, so as to capture even the smallest spark of truth. He warns us, "in choosing or rejecting opinions one should not be influenced by love or hatred for the one presenting the opinion, but rather *by the certitude of truth*";⁵ and again he says, "do not heed by whom a thing is said, but rather *what is said that is good, you should commit to your memory*."⁶

His pure life gave rise to a sort of natural necessity of uncovering and eagerly grasping the truth, especially of the moral order, as if by instinct. He himself says, "One who has the habit of virtue judges rightly concerning those things which should be done according to the virtue, insofar as he has an inclination towards it." For example, "in a matter pertaining to chastity . . . that person will judge correctly . . . who has the habit of chastity."⁷ In these matters that other axiom of Thomas holds true, "Life holds a priority over doctrine, for life leads to knowledge of the truth."⁸

He was possessed of the greatest skill, coupled with a wonderful sense of balance and proportion, for learning and research, reading and meditation, experimentation and abstraction, inductive and deductive reasoning, speculative and practical activity, as well as in the use of analyzing or synthesizing.

This array of perfections flowed even into his works. He

³ *Commentarium in I de Caelo et Mundo*, Lect. 22, n. 8.

⁴ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 107, a. 2.

⁵ *Commentaria in libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, Lib. XII, lect. 9, n. 2566.

⁶ *De modo studendi*, ed. Th. Esser, 18. Vienna, 1882.

⁷ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 6 ad 3; II-II, q. 45, a. 2.

⁸ *Comment. in Matthaeum*, cap. 5, n. 4 in fine. Ed. Marietti, 1912, p. 81a.

gathered to himself alone as into a sea, the streams of truth running through the philosophers and ecclesiastical writers. These he assimilated and purified. Their doctrines, to use the words of Leo XIII, "like the scattered limbs of a body, Thomas gathered together and arranged; he disposed them in wonderful order and increased them with mighty additions."⁹

He published learned commentaries on the chief works of Aristotle, based on a new and accurate translation with which his fellow Dominican, William of Moerbeke, supplied him: Aristotle's Logic, Natural Philosophy, Psychology, Metaphysics and Ethics.

He was thoroughly versed in the substance of the doctrines of Plato and the neo-Platonists based not only upon the references in Aristotle, Cicero and St. Augustine but also upon a reading of the actual texts, for he had in his possession Plato's *Timaeus* with its commentary by Proclus. This fact comes to light from a letter written by the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris to the General Chapter of the Order of Preachers dated May 2, 1274.¹⁰ He also wrote clear and penetrating commentaries on the neo-Platonists Denis, Proclus, and Boethius on the works *De divinis nominibus*, *De causis*, *De hebdomadibus*.

In writing these works he made use of the previous Greek and Arab commentators such as Alexander, Ammonius, Porphyry, Themistius, Philopon, Simplicius, Eustratius, Avicenna, and Averroes. He had their works before him and subjected them to a critical examination with the result that he surpassed each and everyone in explaining Aristotle. "It was for this reason," says Louis of Valladolid, "that philosophers called him *Expositor par excellence*."¹¹

These commentaries on the works of Plato and Aristotle were not made from a merely philological or historical point of view, such as recent writers often adopt. Rather his commentaries were literal and doctrinal, though at the same time the phi-

⁹ Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, Acta Leonis XIII, ed. Bonne Presse, s. d., I, 62.

¹⁰ *Fontes vitae S. Thomae*, ed. H. Laurent, 584.

¹¹ *Brevis historia Conventus Parisiensis Ord. Praed.*, ed. Martène et Durand, "Veterum scriptorum et monumentorum amplissima collectio," VI, 561.

logical, critical and historical aspects such as could be developed at that time were not neglected. If for this reason any accidental and entirely secondary defects crept in, they were restricted and fully compensated by his almost unbelievably complete knowledge of all the works of all the authors he was explaining. To this he added an incredible shrewdness in searching out, examining and detecting the more obscure meanings of the same authors. So well did he assimilate the force, spirit and mind of these philosophers that one might say their very souls had, as it were, transmigrated into that of their commentator; as though, through the exposition of Thomas, one were hearing the authors themselves speaking.

Moreover, he refined their doctrine in a variety of ways, in that he not only exposed their literal meaning but their intent as well. Into their principles he put order, into their arguments he put clarity and more profound conclusions. He corrected their errors and rephrased their inaccurate statements so as to bring out the proper sense. He enriched their doctrine with so many additions that, being compelled to betray themselves at the hand of an interpreter, they seemed to put on and be redolent of Philosophy itself.

It was Thomas alone who truly surpassed them, in that he delineated, in their philosophical efforts and in the fragments of truth which they found, the person of Philosophy, as it were, and imbibed the whole truth in full draughts.

In addition he wrote many original works. Among the minor works are: *De ente et essentia*, *De principiis naturae*, *De natura materiae*, *De principio individuationis*, *De natura generis*, *De quatuor oppositis*, *De natura verbi intellectus*, *De unitate intellectus*, *De substantiis separatis*, *De regimine principum*. Among his major works are his Disputed Questions *De veritate*, *De anima*, *De spiritualibus creaturis*, and the first three books of the *Summa contra Gentiles*. In these, especially the *Contra Gentiles*, the human faculty of reasoning seems to have reached its supreme height.

Apropos of this Leo XIII said:

There is no part of philosophy which he did not handle with acuteness and solidity. He so investigated the laws of reasoning, God and incorporeal substances, man and other sensible things, human acts and their principles, that the full selection of subjects, a beautiful arrangement of their divisions, his excellent plan of procedure, the soundness of his principles and the force of his arguments, his perspicuity and propriety of expression, his facility for explaining the most abstruse questions leave nothing to be desired.¹²

In fact, as is evident in preserved fragments of the autograph of the *Contra Gentiles*, St. Thomas expended the greatest effort and care upon his work, subjecting his manuscript to the most exacting criticism three or four times. He used to revise words, phrases, arguments and whole chapters. He made corrections and changes and polished his work in order to produce it in the most accurate style and order.

On the other hand, he presented arguments so solid and full, so clear and suitably arranged as to reveal the truth and overcome error, that for true philosophers down through the centuries he offers a lasting and inexhaustible armory of weapons for revealing and protecting the truth against every attack from its enemies.

Leo XIII aptly stated:

It also happened that the Angelic Doctor, in his speculations, drew certain philosophical conclusions as to reasons and principles of created things. These conclusions have the very widest reach, and contain, as it were, in their bosom the seeds of truths well nigh infinite in number. These have to be unfolded with most abundant fruits in their own time by the teachers who come after him. As he used his method of philosophizing, not only in teaching the truth, but also in refuting error, he has gained this prerogative for himself. With his own hand he vanquished all errors of ancient times; and still he supplies an armory of weapons which brings us certain victory in the conflict with falsehoods ever springing up in the course of years.¹³

For this reason the famous Cardinal Francisco Toledo, S. J.,

¹² *Aeterni Patris, loc. cit.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 62, 64.

with the advice and approbation of philosophers from every country, wrote:

Thomas has within himself the likeness of all in whom there is any precision of interpretation, weight of doctrine coupled with piety, wide, varied and solid learning and an incredible method for the thorough treatment of whole disciplines. It was not merely because of his Commentaries on Aristotle, but much more by reason of his *Summa Theologiae*, *Summa contra Gentiles*, *Quaestiones Disputatae*, and other writings that he alone gave as much light to Philosophy, to say nothing of Theology, as all the others put together. I believe that it would not at all detract from their excellence if I were to say of Thomas that which each of them would say if he were living and present.¹⁴

The philosophical doctrine of St. Thomas, that is, the spirit of his system and its major propositions, cannot be called Platonic or Aristotelian or the offshoot of any other school. Rather it is thoroughly Christian and human in that it gives evidence of an organization of truths and principles towards which the human mind, naturally Christian, is inclined by nature. There is no system of philosophy which is so much a part of and conformable to nature, and at the same time so capable of perfecting the human mind as the philosophical system of Aquinas. Simple, pure, clear, brief, ordered, beginning with ideas and principles *per se* known, it proceeds by natural steps, as it were, to higher, more profound and hidden truths. Step by step it ascends to the supreme pinnacle and ultimate causes of things. With these well in mind it again returns to the things of the sensible order, weighing and explaining them with the judgment of wisdom. The famous series of twenty-four theses reveal this same order. These propositions, in the judgment of the Sacred Congregation of Studies, March 7, 1916, truly contain the essence of the philosophical doctrine of St. Thomas, in its principles and major propositions.¹⁵

These principles and many others of the same kind, especially

¹⁴ *Commentaria una cum Quaestionibus in Octo libros Aristotelis "de Physica Auscultatione,"* Ad lectorem, fol. 2 v., Venice, 1578.

¹⁵ AAS 8 (1916), 157.

those proper to metaphysics, will never perish as long as nature remains, nor will they age with the passage of centuries, but with perpetual vigor will endure forever. As Pius XI wisely pointed out, these principles are not subjective and artificial, but natural and objective constructs, and therefore will last forever.¹⁶

The portions of St. Thomas' doctrine directly touching sensible phenomena, as well as the method of treatment used to explain them, do not constitute the substance of Thomistic philosophy. These are entirely accidental and change in accordance with the day-by-day development of the experimental sciences. Abstracting from such portions and method, his superstructure of metaphysics remains integral and sound.

The consistency and unity of truth we find most clearly in the system of philosophical doctrine of St. Thomas. Particularly in his metaphysics, psychology, and natural ethics his doctrine shows a wonderful harmony with divinely revealed truths.

Whether we consider St. Thomas' philosophical system in itself, or with regard to supernatural truths accepted on divine faith, or in his method of investigation and teaching, or his succinct, sound, clear and energetic manner of explanation, we must declare that it possesses the greatest worth and efficacy and thus the highest scientific authority.

2. *In Theological Science*

St. Thomas' *intrinsic* and *scientific theological* authority is likewise great, both in regard to St. Thomas himself and his doctrine.

His *personal* gifts of nature and grace wonderfully equipped him to grasp and expound Sacred Theology accurately and completely. He was fully versed in all the sources of Sacred Doctrine,—the Scriptures, Tradition, the Councils and Decrees

¹⁶ "Non verrà mai meno il valore della dottrina tomistica, perchè bisognerebbe che venisse meno il valore delle cose." Allocution to university students, Feb. 1927, in M. Cordovani, "San Tommaso nella parola di Pio XI," *Angelicum*, 6 (1929), 10.

of the Teaching Church, the writings of the Latin and Greek Church Fathers and Doctors. He received their references to the word of God with great faith and piety, and sounded their depths through the gift of wisdom to such an extent that he was frequently rapt in contemplation of the divine mysteries. Thus, in a vital manner, he intimately penetrated and tasted them.

He wonderfully adapted the natural wisdom with which he was fully equipped, and the skill of his genius, which was destined for divine things, to the examination, illustration and defense of those truths of faith with scientific methodology. This methodology bore both upon the truths he knew naturally by analogy, and upon the connection of the mysteries themselves with man's ultimate end. In this matter, his way was lighted and directed by divine faith and the gift of wisdom. As Pius XI appositely said:

This is the region in which faith is supreme and the science of faith is called Theology. Science of this kind will be all the more perfect in a man in proportion as he is better acquainted with the evidence for faith and has, at the same time, a more fully developed and trained faculty of philosophizing.¹⁷

Leo XIII tells us:

There is needed a use of Philosophy, both perpetual and manifold, in order that Sacred Theology may assume and put on the nature, the habit and character of true science.¹⁸

This being the case, one may assert without boasting that there was never a theologian stronger in faith than Aquinas, one richer in wisdom, better provided with a deeper understanding of philosophy, nor one more dedicated to the study of divine truth. He made his own the words of St. Hilary, "I regard this as the chief task of my life, my obligation to God to see to it *that my every word and meaning bespeaks God.*"¹⁹

¹⁷ *Studiorum Ducem*, loc. cit. 317.

¹⁸ *Aeterni Patris*, loc. cit. 50.

¹⁹ *C. Gentiles*, I, 2.

The following, taken from his own work, exactly corresponds to this axiom:

Since the perfection of man consists in his union with God, *a man should rest in and be attracted to divine things with all his power, as much as he is able*, so that his intellect may be free for contemplation and his reason for the investigation of divine things, according to Psalm 72, v. 28: 'It is good for me to adhere to my God.'²⁰

And again he says, "The human mind ought always to be moved more and more to a knowledge of God, according to the measure that is proper to it," that is, in the highest degree possible.²¹

It should not, then, be considered unusual that his many great perfections flowed into his theological works, nor should there be any doubt, as Pius XI said, "that Aquinas raised Theology to the highest eminence of dignity."²²

He treated every part of theology most skillfully and enriched theology as a whole, lavishing upon it the incredible luxuriance of his genius. He laid solid and lasting foundations for that fundamental part of Theology called *Apologetics*. Succeeding theologians have reared their structure upon the bases he had afforded, such as his distinction between natural and supernatural truth concerning God, the proper qualities of each, the nature of revelation and faith, the possibility and necessity of revelation, the credibility of the mysteries of faith and the motives supporting it. Cajetan, Bañez, Zúmel, Navarrete, Nazarius, John of St. Thomas, and the Salmanticenses developed the principles of Apologetics supplied by Aquinas in learned commentaries on the *Prima Secundae* and the *Secunda Secundae*, where the nature of faith and theology is treated. Through them these principles were made available to later Thomists who brought out special works suited to our times, as Cardinal Zigliara, Fathers Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange.

The treatises on the *Church* itself viewed by modern theo-

²⁰ In *Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, ad 7.

²² *Studiorum Ducem*, loc. cit.

logians as the Mystical Body of Christ, its constitution, qualities and marks, the primacy and infallibility of the Roman Pontiff, the members of the Church, all had St. Thomas as their precursor and to all intents and purposes their creator. He outlined the basic foundations later developed by his famous pupils John of Torquemada, Cajetan, Bañez, Nazarius. Through them his fundamental ideas passed into the modern tracts *de Ecclesia Christi*.

That the theological method, contained especially in his tract *de locis theologicis*, came chiefly from Thomas, is frankly stated by the famous Melchior Cano, founder and parent of this branch of theological science. He says:

As a manifestation of my gratitude I bow to him to whom I owe so much, and I ever admit my lasting indebtedness to him in this task. For my part, *St. Thomas was both author and teacher in the composition of this work.*²³

Even *Dogmatic Theology* "also found in Thomas by far the richest of all commentators."²⁴ With so much acumen did he treat the nature of God and His attributes, His unity, goodness, perfection, simplicity, infinity, immensity, eternity, incomprehensibility, ineffability, omniscience, beatitude, providence, omnipotence, the mysteries of the divine will and predestination, that he left for succeeding theologians an opportunity to imitate but not to equal or surpass. Clearly and aptly he described the intimate life of God in the Trinity of Persons, as far as that can be done by one not yet in heaven. He delineated with amazing penetration the creation of the world, man, angels, and the elevation of men and angels to the supernatural order, along with the fall of both. He treated also of the divine conservation and direction of all creatures. Never was there a theologian who so subtly penetrated or fully and clearly explained the nature, faculties and operations of human and angelic creatures. In exploring and elucidating the

²³ *De locis theologicis*, lib. XII, cap. 2, no. 2, Melchioris Cani Opera, ed. T. Cucchi (Rome 1900) III, II.

²⁴ *Studiorum Duce*, loc. cit., 318.

mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption, and other mysteries hidden in the life and death of Christ, he appeared to have wrested the honors from other theologians, just as he did in his hymning and explanation of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and in his eschatological questions. When he finished his tract on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, he received the praise and approbation of the Lord Himself, who said, *Well have you written of Me, Thomas*.²⁵ Indeed, his tract on this Sacrament was "clearly miraculous," said Benedict XV.²⁶

One must place the same evaluation upon his *Moral Theology* dealing with the direction of human acts to a supernatural end. No ecclesiastical writer, Father or Theologian, so fully, deeply and clearly explained the ultimate end of man, human acts, the passions, the divine law and its precepts, grace, the vices, and the moral and theological virtues.

It was this part of theology which, in the estimation of his contemporaries, Aquinas especially enriched. They called him the "renowned instrument of God in Theology and Philosophy, and especially in Moral Theology."²⁷ He not only treated the life of the individual as regulated by the moral law, but in addition exposed the principles and doctrine upon which a rich family life must rest, as well as the rights and duties of parents. Likewise he discussed the implications of social life, and the true and safe direction of conduct among nations. All of these he handled from the viewpoint both of nature and of grace. As for his teaching on personal prudence and the prudence of rulers, right and justice, authority and obedience, private property and almsgiving, war and peace, the rights of nations and their mutual obligations, all these were fruitfully developed in later times by Cajetan, Francisco de Vitoria, Dominic de Soto, Bañez, and others, and applied later to the

²⁵ G. de Tocco, *Vita S. Thomae*, cap. 52, ed. D. Prümmer, p. 126.

²⁶ Letter to Fr. Lépicier, Jan. 10, 1917, AAS, 9 (1917), 102.

²⁷ Ptholomaeus de Lucca, "Hist. Eccl.," lib. XXII, cap. 24, in Mandonnet, *Des écrits authentiques de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 50; *Chronica minor auctore minorita erphordiensi*, "Monumenta Germaniae historica," *Scriptores*, XXIV, 212.

texture, development and preservation of American law. Even at present his principles are considered to be of profound practical worth and hold a position of respect.

With singular dignity and loftiness of thought he enhanced and advanced *Ascetical* and *Mystical Theology*. Depth, devotion and thoroughness mark from start to finish his treatment of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Fruits and the Beatitudes, the Indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the souls of the just, the active and contemplative life, prayer and the mystical states, religious and episcopal perfection, the rewards and effects of burning and ardent charity.

These are his famous words on the verse: *Taste and see that the Lord is sweet* (Ps. 33: 0) .

In the material order we first see and then taste; but *in spiritual things one must first taste in order to see, because no one knows who does not taste*. Therefore (the Psalmist) says *first, taste; and then, see*.²⁸

In another place he adds:

We should understand divine things according to this unifying action of grace—not as if *divine things were drawn down to the level of our being, but rather our whole being is established above nature in God*, with the result that we become totally God-like through his unifying action of grace.²⁹

In his *Exegesis* and *Biblical Theology* he completely and learnedly interpreted Sacred Scripture. First, he firmly established and clearly explained the fundamental principles of this study: its nature, which, as the word of God, has God inspiring it as its principal Author; and the man who is inspired, whom we call the hagiographer, as its instrumental author.³⁰ Further, he explained the nature of inspiration and the light of prophecy;³¹ its truth, in that it is the word of God Who cannot deceive nor be deceived;³² its multiple senses, the equivocal

²⁸ *Comment. in Psalm. 33:9.*

²⁹ *Comment. in Dionysii de Divinis Nominibus*, ch. 7, lect. I.

³⁰ *Quodl. VII*, a. 14, ad 5.

³¹ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, qq. 171-175.

³² *Ibid.*, q. 1, a. 3.

sense and others, proceeding one from the other, but all depending upon the one fundamental literal sense.³³ And finally, he discusses the development of divine revelation in the Old Testament and how it was suited in the manner of its presentation to the cultural conditions of the Jews to whom it was given.³⁴

He commented on the chief books of the Scriptures: Isaias, Jeremias, Job, the Psalter of David in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, besides the *Catena Aurea* on the four Gospels, a work of great learning and incredible labor, in which he collected and ordered with wonderful precision whatever the whole tradition of the Greek and Latin Fathers had brought forth, he wrote special expositions of the Gospels of Matthew and John and all of the Pauline epistles.

In these commentaries, especially on the Gospel of St. John and the Epistles of St. Paul, there is a marvelous fullness of biblical and theological teaching, dogmatic, moral and spiritual. The result is that they form an inexhaustible gold mine for exegetes, theologians, preachers, and for all those who strive for perfection.

St. Thomas' theology, as a complete unit, possesses such dignity that it surpasses every human science in its theoretical aspect and every practical science in the regulation and direction of human action; in its supernatural grasp and tendency it is without peer. As Cardinal Bessarion said, *Among the saints he is the most learned, and among the learned, the most saintly.*³⁵ and for that reason he is the prince of all theologians. What Thomas has said about the perfect theologian fits no other theologian as well as Thomas himself:

The doctrine of Sacred Scripture [and Sacred Theology] has this peculiarity, that its content is not only speculative, as in Geometry, but practical as well, in that it perfects the affections. It is for this reason that Matthew (5 : 19) says, 'He that shall do and teach, he

³³ *Quodl.* VII, aa. 14-16; *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 10.

³⁴ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. I, a. 7; I, q. 68, a. 3; q. 70, a. 1 ad 3.

³⁵ *Adversus calumniatorem Platonis*, lib. II, cap. 3.

shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' In other sciences it is sufficient for a man to be perfect intellectually. In this science one must be perfect not only intellectually but morally as well.³⁶

Such fullness and inherent perfection of St. Thomas' theology is apparent to anyone who reads or studies his many theological works, or to put it briefly, his major and minor works.

His minor works include: *De perfectione vitae spiritualis*, *De duobus praeceptis caritatis et de decem legis praeceptis*, *De articulis fidei et Ecclesiae sacramentis*, *Contra errores graecorum*, *De forma absolutionis*, *De rationibus fidei*, *Compendium Theologiae*, *Expositio in primam et secundam Decretalem*, *In orationem dominicam expositio*, *In salutationem angelicam expositio*, *In symbolum Apostolorum expositio*.

His major works are: *Commentarium super quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, *Quaestiones disputatae et quodlibetales*, (such as *De potentia*, *De unione Verbi Incarnati*, *De malo*, *De virtutibus in communi*, *De sensibus Sacrae Scripturae*) and especially his *Summa contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologiae*.

The celebrated words of William of Tocco apply quite accurately to these major works:

Thomas instituted *new* articles in his teaching, discovered a *new* and brilliant method in his presentation, and adduced *new* reasons in support of his arguments. No one who heard him teach *new* things and illustrate doubtful matters with *new* reasons would doubt that God had enlightened him with the rays of a *new* light. So swift and certain in judgment was he, that he did not hesitate to teach and write *new* opinions which God had thought worthy to inspire anew.³⁷

Doubtless, besides his angelic genius fortified with heavenly gifts of nature and grace, the cause of this fresh approach seems to be a profound knowledge of the sources and instruments of theology and a more precise and dextrous application of them. He channeled into the service and utility of theology this fuller

³⁶ *Comment. in Epist. ad Hebraeos*, cap. 5, lect. 2.

³⁷ *Op. cit.*, cap. 14, p. 81.

and more accurate knowledge of Scripture and the tradition of the Fathers, his truer and more penetrating appraisal of reality which stemmed from a more refined and penetrating grasp of philosophy.

Previous theologians, and some of his own time as well, very timidly applied reason and human science to explain theological uncertainties and questions. Such usage was aimed more at literary ornamentation than fuller understanding. But Thomas, following in the footsteps of his beloved master, St. Albert the Great, called upon every human science, and all the powers of reason to be of service, not as masters but as servants, in the defense, illustration and explanation of the faith. For Thomas said, "Since grace does not destroy nature but perfects it, natural reason should minister to the faith, as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity."³⁸

And so Thomas completed the work of renovation and consolidation of divine and human science begun by Albert and brought it to perfection. He established two bodies of doctrine essentially distinct, philosophy and theology. Both enjoy full autonomy in their own field, in such a way that there is not and cannot be any real opposition or contradiction between them. Rather there is marvelous harmony, through their mutual aid and assistance. For reason should be subordinate to faith and serve it as nature serves grace and the creature serves the Creator. So it happened that Theology, without in the slightest abandoning its character as effective knowledge aimed toward piety, as many theologians of his time asserted, assumed at the same time the nature of a precise science, since it is truly and in a full sense the science of faith.

This work of such tremendous volume, fruitfulness and value, for which St. Thomas strenuously labored and spent himself, suffered calumny and persecution while he was living and even after his death. These attacks reached their culmination in the condemnation of several propositions by Stephen Tempier, John Peckham and Robert Kilwardby.³⁹ But, undaunted, he was

³⁸ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 8 ad 2.

³⁹ H. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 596-617.

victorious in every skirmish, and as Pius XI said, "Like gold which no acid can dissolve, so he retained his force and splendor and still retains it."⁴⁰

In witness of this are the words of the professors of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris, calling him "morning star preeminent in the world, radiance and light of the age, indeed, we may say, a light greater than the light of day," and by singular privilege given to the world by the Author of nature to illuminate the secrets of nature.⁴¹

We find the same praises in a Lament on the death of Thomas written about the same year.⁴²

His hearers and pupils are of the same mind. He is celebrated by Remigius Girolamus as *Teacher among teachers and saint at summit of perfection*.⁴³

*Doctor doctorum
Sanctusque cacumine morum.*

Ptolemy of Lucca, "Thomas was the ark of Philosophy and Theology."⁴⁴ According to Rambert de Primadizzi of Bologna, "He wrote unexcelled treatises overflowing with truth,"⁴⁵

⁴⁰ *Studiorum ducem, loc. cit.*, 317.

⁴¹ Letter to the Dominican General Chapter, May 2, 1274, H. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 584.

⁴² H. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 586, 587:

Hic ut stella matutina, ut solaris radius,
Verbo, vita et doctrina praeulsit Parisius;
Cura dedit hunc divina, velut iubar clarius
In multis utilius

.....
Gemma morum, flos doctorum, mente vir aethereus,
Fulgens orbis cereus;
Hic pudoris vas decorum, Scripturarum puteus,
Exemplar philosophorum, thronus Regis aureus.
Alumnus Philosophiae, ex Aquino nobilis,
Lucerna Theologiae, scriptis admirabilis,
Explanavit nocte die libros Aristotelis;
Vir cunctis amabilis,
Bonis fuit mentis piae, malisque terribilis.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 589:

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, cap. 15.

⁴⁵ *Apologeticum veritatis contra corruptorium*, prol., p. 3, ed. J. P. Müller, Rome 1943.

through whose mouth spoke St. Augustine, Boethius, St. Anselm, Richard of St. Victor and all who had any learning.⁴⁶

Further, they had no hesitation in comparing him to the Fathers, especially to St. Augustine, and to the great Apostle Paul. Blessed James Capocci of Viterbo

believed according to faith and the Holy Ghost that our Savior, the Teacher of truth, for the enlightenment of the world and the Universal Church, had sent Paul the Apostle, and later Augustine, and recently Brother Thomas whom he believed would not be supplanted by one of greater authority even to the end of the world.⁴⁷

Despite the attacks of his rivals, his authority increased and reached such a point that he convinced every mind and allied it to his teaching, and was hailed as the universal master and teacher. As Bartholomew of Capua, who had known him personally testified:

Though after his death the writings of Brother Thomas were impugned by many great men and subjected to the test of sharp criticism, nevertheless his authority never decreased but rather waxed stronger. With reverence and respect it was diffused over the whole earth,⁴⁸

since as Blessed James of Viterbo says:

In his writings are found universal truth, universal clarity, universal enlightenment, and the universal order and doctrine necessary for arriving quickly at perfect understanding.⁴⁹

Stephen de Salanhac, before the year 1278, wrote:

Brother Thomas of Aquin in Apulia is an outstanding doctor, famous throughout the world. He wrote much, and the whole East and West with impartial judgment embraced his safe and clear doctrine. They held it in admiration, rejoiced and gloried in its possession. His doctrine, as a shining light, endures and increases

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, a. 3, p. 24.

⁴⁷ H. Laurent, *op. cit.*, 383, Process of canonization at Naples, testimony of Bartholomew of Capua, no. 83.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 384.

up until that day when the morning light will rise. *All use him as a source, even his rivals and disparagers, who do so slyly.*⁵⁰

In the succeeding centuries and even up to our own time he has elicited the approbation or at least the admiration of men by his genius and knowledge. This was especially true of the learned and even those not of the faith. If we listen to Erasmus, there was no theologian equal in industry, or more balanced in genius, or more solid in learning.⁵¹ Leibnitz admired the solidity of his doctrine,⁵² Christian von Wolff the keenness of his intelligence,⁵³ James Brucker the excellence of his mind, fullness of his teaching and his tireless industry,⁵⁴ Adolph Harnack the herculean strength of his understanding,⁵⁵ and R. Seerberg salutes Thomas as the greatest of the theologians and philosophers of the Church, who planted on high the standard of progress in philosophy and theology.⁵⁶

Therefore, the intrinsic strength of the doctrine of St. Thomas in philosophy and theology is so great that it is rated the highest not only by his supporters and friends but even by his rivals and his enemies.

II

CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE DOCTOR COMMUNIS OF THE CHURCH

This authority which may also be called *dogmatic* corresponds to the conformity of a theological or philosophical doctrine with divine revelation. It is measured by the approbation and

⁵⁰ *Chronica*, cf. Berthier, *Sanctus Thomas Aquinas*, "Doctor Communis" *Ecclesiae*, I, LVI-LVII, Rome, 1914. Cf. also G. de Tocco, *Vita*, cap. 16, ed. Prümmer, 85; Pthol. de Lucca, *Hist. Eccl.*, cap. 8-9, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.* LVII.

⁵¹ "Adnotationes in Epistolam ad Romanos," cap. I, in B. de Rubeis, *Dissertatione criticae in S. Thomam Aquinatem*, dissert. 6, cap. 2, no. 1. *Opera S. Thomae*, ed. leon. I, 115 b.

⁵² *Tentamina Theoliceae*, III, § 330. *Opera*. ed. L. Dutens, I, 358.

⁵³ *Theol. Naturalis*, § 683, p. 242, Verona, 1738.

⁵⁴ *Historia critica Philosophiae*, III, 803. Leipzig, 1743.

⁵⁵ *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 3, 498. Tübingen, 1910.

⁵⁶ *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, III, 318, Leipzig, 1913.

commendation of the Teaching Authority of the Church whose function it is to judge such conformity. Thus *the weight of this type of authority is wholly derived from the authority of the Church*. As Thomas himself writes:

The teaching of Catholic Doctors has its authority from the Church; for that reason we must rely upon the authority of the Church more than upon the authority of an Augustine, a Jerome, or any other Doctor.⁵⁷

When the authority of the Church consistently and over a long period approves and commends the doctrine of anyone for all the faithful, *it makes that doctrine its own, and invests it with its own authority*. The Church does not create the force and truth of that doctrine out of nothing but rather supposes its existence and recognizes it, authoritatively proposing it to be followed and imitated. The manner of such approbation is similar to that by which the canonization of one of the faithful by the Church does not create but supposes the sanctity of the person. The Church merely recognizes that sanctity, and authoritatively proposes it for veneration and imitation.

Primarily, the Church approves and commends theological doctrine which deals *per se* with divinely revealed truths. But secondarily, it can approve philosophical doctrine, which is properly concerned with truths of the natural order, insofar as that doctrine is in conformity with truths of the supernatural order. For this very reason Benedict XV called it "philosophy according to Christ."⁵⁸ And so the canonical doctrine of St. Thomas should be treated first in the field of theology and then in philosophy.

1. *In Theology*

John XXII, who canonized St. Thomas, said before the Cardinals in Consistory, when a motion was initiated to begin the process of canonization:

⁵⁷ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 10, a. 12.

⁵⁸ *Motu proprio, Non multo post*, de Romana S. Thomae Academia, AAS 7 (1915), 6, Dec. 31, 1914.

His life was saintly and his doctrine could only be miraculous . . . because *he enlightened the Church more than all the other Doctors*. By the use of his works a man would profit more in one year than if he studied the doctrine of others for his whole life.⁵⁹

At the completion of the process of canonization, when more than 300 miracles performed by St. Thomas had been recounted, the Pontiff said:

Why should we seek more miracles? *He has performed as many miracles as he wrote articles*. Truly this glorious Doctor, after the Apostles and the early Doctors, has greatly enlightened the Church.⁶⁰

Clement VI, in his Apostolic Letter *In Ordine Fratrum Praedicatorum* of Feb. 6, 1344, directed to all the faithful, praised the Order of Preachers for producing:

That famous and fruitful branch, the blessed Thomas of Aquin, outstanding doctor and confessor. The whole Church, gathering many fruits of his spiritual maturity from the writing and teaching of his wisdom and doctrine, is continually refreshed by their aroma.⁶¹

Further, the same Pontiff proclaimed in the Dominican General Chapter held at Brives in 1346, that all the brethren are expressly forbidden even to dare to withdraw from the doctrine of St. Thomas.⁶²

For *Blessed Urban V* the mind of St. Thomas was the "treasury of divine wisdom," which, with the aid of divine grace, "has unlocked the hidden things of Scripture, solved its puzzles, brought light to its difficulties, and cleared up its questions."⁶³ And he added, "At Toulouse there is a new university for theology which We wish to be founded on the solid

⁵⁹ *Acta Sanctorum*, vol. I-martii, 681-682.

⁶⁰ P. Percin, *Monumenta Conventus Tolosani Ord. Praed.*, cf. J. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 50.

⁶¹ Cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 55.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶³ Bull *Copiosus*, June 16, 1368, in which he ordered the body and head of St. Thomas to be brought to Toulouse and given to the Friars Preachers, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 63, 65.

and firm doctrine of that saint.”⁶⁴ To the Archbishop of Toulouse and to all the Masters and Doctors of the University he wrote;

We wish, and the purpose of the present letter is, to *enjoin upon you that you follow the doctrine of the Blessed Thomas as the true and Catholic doctrine, and endeavor to spread it with all your power.*⁶⁵

Indeed, as *Nicholas V* said, “By his doctrine the universal Church is enlightened,”⁶⁶ because he, on the word of *Alexander VI*, “as a splendid light, enlightened the Christian world in every respect.”⁶⁷

Pius IV heartily praised the custom of the University of Salamanca for its yearly celebration of his feast, in the Dominican Church of St. Stephen, and granted many indulgences so that great devotion might attend the feast “of such a great Doctor whose doctrine, as everyone knows, brought and daily brings such great fruit to the Church.”⁶⁸ He further invited all to imitate that custom and follow his doctrine.

St. Pius V, who declared him a Doctor of the Universal Church, recognized in Thomas “the most brilliant light of the Church,” whose works are:

the most certain rule of Christian doctrine by which he enlightened the Apostolic Church in answering conclusively numberless errors . . . , which illumination has often been evident in the past and recently stood forth prominently in the decrees of the Council of Trent.⁶⁹

He also said of Aquinas that “his theological doctrine, accepted by the Catholic Church, *outshines every other as being safer and more secure.*”⁷⁰

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, 64.

⁶⁵ Bull *Laudabilis Deus*, Aug. 31, 1368, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 64.

⁶⁶ Bull *Pius fidelium*, July 20, 1451, *op. cit.*, 76.

⁶⁷ Bull *Etsi cunctae*, July 29, 1496, *op. cit.*, 84.

⁶⁸ Bull *Salvatoris*, April 15, 1564, *op. cit.*, 96.

⁶⁹ Bull *Mirabilis Deus*, April 11, 1567, *op. cit.* 98.

⁷⁰ Bull *In eminenti*, July 29, 1570, *op. cit.*, 99.

Clement VIII praised him as the angelic interpreter of the divine will,⁷¹ and added:

The proof of his doctrine is the great number of books which he wrote in a very short time, in practically every branch of learning, with remarkable order and wonderful planning, and *with no error at all*. While writing these works he had the holy Apostles Peter and Paul speaking to him and at the command of God they explained certain passages to him. When he finished his works he heard them approved by the express word of Christ the Lord.⁷²

For *Paul V*, St. Thomas is the shining athlete of the Catholic faith:

By the shield of whose works the Church Militant happily escaped the darts of heretics,⁷³ defender of the Catholic Church and conqueror of heretics.⁷⁴

Making this idea his own, *Benedict XIII* wrote to the brethren of the Order of Preachers:

Pursue with energy your Doctor's works, *more brilliant than the sun and written without the shadow of error*. These works made the Church illustrious with wonderful erudition, since they march ahead and proceed with unimpeded step, protecting and vindicating by that *surest rule of Christian doctrine*, the truth of our holy religion.⁷⁵

His doctrine, continually commended to the faithful by the constant approbation of the Supreme Pontiffs, cannot be adorned with praise befitting its great merits in the Church. That same doctrine, lighting up the whole world as the sun, brought forth tremendous good for the Christian Church and every day bears more fruit.⁷⁶

Benedict XIV again brought these things to mind and adopted them in the Bull approving the Theological College of

⁷¹ Bull *In quo est*, Nov. 22, 1603, *op. cit.*, 109.

⁷² Bull *Sicut Angeli*, Nov. 22, 1603, *op. cit.*, 112.

⁷³ Bull *Splendidissimus athleta*, Sept. 17, 1607, *op. cit.*, 117.

⁷⁴ Bull *Cum sicut*, Oct. 20, 1614, *ibid.*

⁷⁵ Bull *Demissas preces*, Nov. 6, 1724, *op. cit.* 147.

⁷⁶ Bull *Pretiosus*, May 26, 1727, *ibid.*, 148, 149.

St. Denis outside of Granada, on August 21, 1756. At the time he greatly praised and confirmed its statutes which commanded "that henceforth none of the Masters or Lectors of the College of St. Denis shall read, hand down or explain any other doctrine to their students in that College."⁷⁷ Having himself written many learned works, the Pontiff freely confessed on his own behalf:

In the works We have written on various points, after We had diligently perused and examined the opinion of the Angelic Doctor, We adhered and subscribed freely to his ever admirable doctrine. We candidly confess that if there is anything good in our books it must be ascribed wholly to such a great Teacher rather than to Ourselves.⁷⁸

The same Pontiff continued:

The other praises of the holy Doctor are surpassed by this, that he never despised his opponents or seemed to vilify or betray them but treated all courteously and very humanely. If he came upon any of their expressions which were inaccurate, ambiguous or obscure, he would temper his criticism with a smooth and benign interpretation. If the cause of religion or faith demanded that he investigate and refute their opinion, he would accomplish the refutation with so much discretion that he deserved no less praise for his manner of disagreement than for his assertion of the Catholic truth.⁷⁹

Pius VI would not at all allow "that the divine eloquence of Thomas should be bandied about, as if it were a novel doctrine, and impugned by idle discussion"⁸⁰ since, as he himself said later:

In many schools Thomas Aquinas was rightly called the Sun of doctrine and the standard for theologians, because he taught only what was consistent with Sacred Scripture and the Fathers. Every-

⁷⁷ *Op. cit.*, 156.

⁷⁸ Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, July 3, 1756, the Pontiff presiding, *op. cit.*, 158.

⁷⁹ Constitution *Sollicita*, *op. cit.*, 161.

⁸⁰ Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, the Pontiff presiding, May 17, 1777, *op. cit.*, 170.

thing he wrote is worthy, as it is piously said, of divine confirmation. And so Our predecessors commended his doctrine with outstanding praises as the shield of Christian religion and the resolute guardian of the Church. Recently, Benedict XIV, whose wisdom We thoroughly admired, ordered Thomistic doctrine to be restored in the College of St. Denis the Areopagite outside Granada, and proposed the penalty of interdict for anyone who departed from it.⁸¹

Pius IX said:

The facts testify that the Church, in the Ecumenical Councils held after his death, so used his writings that many of the decrees propounded *found their source in his works and sometimes even the same words were used* to clarify Catholic dogmas or to destroy rising errors.⁸²

Leo XIII, recalling all these instances and going beyond them, recollected with approval that Thomas' doctrine was present at the deliberations and the decrees of the Fathers in all the Ecumenical Councils held after his death. Not only was it present but practically presiding "and contending with irresistible force and auspicious result against the errors of the Greeks, heretics and rationalists." The Pontiff added:

This is the greatest glory of Thomas, altogether his own and shared with no other Catholic Doctor, that the Fathers of Trent, in order to proceed in an orderly fashion during the conclave, desired to have opened upon the altar together with the Scriptures and the decrees of the Supreme Pontiffs, the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas whence they could draw counsel, reasons and answers.⁸³

Leo XIII himself desired nothing more than

that the excellent wisdom of the Angelic Doctor flow far and wide. There is nothing more suitable to oppose the perverse notions of our times. There is no more powerful agent for conserving the truth.⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Letter to Fr. Raymond Bianchi, July 9, 1870, *op. cit.*, 177.

⁸³ *Aeterni Patris*, *loc. cit.*, 66.

⁸⁴ *Motu proprio Placere nobis*, on the complete edition of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, Jan. 18, 1880, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 200.

Truly,

anyone seriously interested in Philosophy and Theology and desirous of attaining some proficiency in those disciplines needs nothing more than a greater familiarity with the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*.⁸⁵

Indeed,

the book *par excellence* whence students can study Scholastic Theology with much profit is the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas.⁸⁶ And those who are doing any work in sacred science so sharply attacked at present, have a source in the volumes of St. Thomas whence they can fully demonstrate the bases of Christian faith, whence they can convince others of supernatural truth, and whence they can repel the vicious attacks of the enemy upon our holy religion.⁸⁷

The Pontiff was lavish in his praise of Francis Satolli, later Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Studies, for his edition of commentaries

on the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, so that his readers might not allow the text of the Angelic Doctor to escape from their hands. In this way only and not otherwise will the genuine doctrine of St. Thomas flourish in the schools, which is a goal very close to Our heart. *For the method of teaching which relies upon the authority and judgment of several masters has a changeable basis, in that mutually contradictory opinions arise which cannot be reconciled with the mind of St. Thomas. Then, too, such diverse opinions nourish dissension and disagreement which can no longer disturb Catholic schools without great harm to Christian knowledge.* We desire that teachers of Sacred Theology, imitating the Tridentine Fathers, should wish to have the *Summa* of St. Thomas open on their desks before them, whence they may find counsel, arguments and theological conclusions. From such schools the Church may rightly expect fearless soldiers who can destroy error and defend Catholicism.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Letter to Cardinals Simeoni and Zigliara, Oct. 2, 1886, *op. cit.*, 230.

⁸⁶ Encyclical *Depuis le jour*, on the education of the clergy in France, Sept. 8, 1899. *Acts*, VI, 100.

⁸⁷ Brief *Cum hoc sit*, Aug. 4, 1880, *op. cit.*, I, 114.

⁸⁸ Letter of June 19, 1886, *op. cit.*, 228.

He also strongly praised A. Breznay for editing the works of Cardinal Peter Pazmany,

Pazmany is one who with profound sense and lofty erudition has issued treatises on the nobler branches of learning. He followed as leader and master our remarkable Thomas, who is easily the prince of Sacred Science.⁸⁹

He insisted yet more urgently:

This point is vital, that Bishops expend every effort to see that young men, destined to be the hope of the Church, should be imbued with the holy and heavenly doctrine of the Angelic Doctor. In those places where young men have devoted themselves to the patronage and doctrine of St. Thomas, true wisdom will flourish, drawn as it is from solid principles, and explained by reason in an orderly fashion.⁹⁰

We know that the Catholic clergy will be *more solidly penetrated by divine science the more fully and thoroughly it is imbued with the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas*.⁹¹ The more the clergy is penetrated by the doctrine of St. Thomas, the more it will go forth instructed with stronger bases for a solid faith, and *so much the more fruitful and useful will be its ministry to the faithful*. Furthermore, those who impede Catholic truth with fallacious arguments will find its defenders better prepared, and supplied with excellent weapons for a strenuous defense.⁹²

If Sacred Theology is seen to flourish and progress according to the mind of St. Thomas, that fact should be a cause for rejoicing. So the Archbishop of Milan is congratulated upon the restoration in the Theological Faculty of Milan of

Theology proceeding correctly and well according to the plan and method of Aquinas in accordance with Our command. Every day We become more clearly aware how powerfully Sacred Doctrine taught by its Master and Patron, Thomas, affords the greatest possible utility for both clergy and laity.⁹³

In following the leadership of Thomas scholars enter upon

⁸⁹ Letter of Sept. 5, 1901, *op. cit.*, 269.

⁹⁰ Apostolic Letter on the Mexican Hierarchy, June 23, 1891, *op. cit.*, 239.

⁹¹ Letter to Rev. P. J. Berthier, Aug. 29, 1892, *op. cit.*, 242.

⁹² Letter to the Patriarch of Venice, March 26, 1881, *op. cit.*, 217-218.

⁹³ Letter of July 31, 1893, *op. cit.*, 254.

the right path for seeking a knowledge of the mysteries of faith, as far as this life allows. And so,

It is right that young men in the Academies and Schools should be chiefly exercised in acquiring a scientific knowledge of dogma by means of reasoning from the articles of faith to their consequences, according to the rules of approved and sound philosophy; yet the judicious and instructed theologian will by no means pass by that method of doctrine which draws its proof from the authority of the Bible; for Theology does not receive its principles from any other science but immediately from God by revelation. So it does not receive of other sciences as from a superior but uses them as her inferiors and handmaids. (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a 5 ad 2.) It is this view of doctrinal teaching which is laid down and recommended by the prince of theologians, Aquinas.⁹⁴

St. Thomas is to be considered the master not only in speculative theology but also in positive theology and biblical exegesis. The Pontiff went on,

Care must be taken that young men approach biblical studies suitably instructed and formed; otherwise just hopes will be frustrated, or what is worse, they will unthinkingly risk the danger of error, falling an easy prey to the sophism and labored erudition of the Rationalists. They will be very well prepared indeed if, by the method We have pointed out and prescribed, they studiously cultivate and thoroughly understand Philosophy and Theology under the leadership of St. Thomas. In this way they will be well prepared to begin the study both of the Bible and of positive theology and will make satisfactory progress in both.⁹⁵

By his own example the Pontiff strengthened this admonition. For, in his learned and salutary Encyclical Letters he always used St. Thomas Aquinas as his guide and preceptor. This can be easily recognized in his Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* on the study of Sacred Scripture, the Encyclicals *Immortale Dei* and *Sapientiae Christianae* on the Christian constitution of States and the civil duties of Christians, the Encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* and *Libertas* on social and political questions, the Encyclical *Satis cognitum* on the unity of the Church, the

⁹⁴ *Providentissimus Deus*, Nov. 18, 1893, *op. cit.*, IV, 28.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

Encyclicals *Tametsi* and *Mirae caritatis* on Christ the Redeemer and the Holy Eucharist, the Encyclical *Divinum illud munus* on the action of the Holy Spirit in the souls of the just, and many others.

Blessed Pius X made all these remarkable approbations of Thomistic theology his own and asserted that the chief of Leo's praises is his restoration of the doctrine of St. Thomas. For he restored the Angelic Doctor . . . as the leader and master of Theology, whose divine genius fashioned weapons marvelously suited to protect the truth and destroy the many errors of the times. Indeed, those principles of wisdom, useful for all time, which the holy Fathers and Doctors passed on to us, have been organized by no one more aptly than by Thomas, and no one has explained them more clearly.⁹⁶

He also found much consolation in the fact that the study of Theology in the University of Fribourg in Switzerland

Was being guided by Dominican brethren who, following a true appraisal of science, especially of sacred science, clothe themselves with the security of true teaching, for they have their own brother in Theology, that divine light, Thomas Aquinas, who is not only the prince but also the leader and master of sacred schools. This is as Our predecessor Leo XIII ordered and We confirm that order with the certainty of fruitful results.⁹⁷

In addition he urged,

That no one, in any way whatsoever, depart from the regulations of the Church in the matter of teaching. Rejecting modernistic fallacies, let them deal only with the sources of Sacred Doctrine and well-based Philosophy from the rich vein of the Angelic Doctor.⁹⁸

Indeed those who depart from Thomas, especially in Theology, "seem to effect ultimately their own withdrawal from the Church."⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Apostolic Letter *In praecipuis* to the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, Jan. 23, 1904, *Acta Pii X*, ed. Bonne Presse, I, 124.

⁹⁷ Letter to the Bishop of St. Gall, Feb. 6, 1906, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 274.

⁹⁸ Letter to the Professors of the Theological Faculty of Fribourg, July 11, 1908, *op. cit.*, 277.

⁹⁹ Letter to Fr. Pègues, Nov. 17, 1907, *op. cit.*, 276.

On the contrary, to follow Thomas as leader is the same as never departing from the rule of Christian truth.¹⁰⁰

In this particular matter no safer principle can be employed than to follow Thomas as leader and master. Those who write of divine things according to his mind draw great light and strength from this source.¹⁰¹

We consider of very great value the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, with which We especially wish all students to be imbued, in order that they may sweep out depraved ideas of divine and human things, which insinuate themselves everywhere, and being solidly based in Christian truth themselves, they may implant it deeply in the hearts of all.¹⁰²

As we have said, one may not desert Aquinas, especially in philosophy and theology, without great harm; *following him is the safest way to a knowledge of divine things.*¹⁰³

His golden doctrine lights up the mind with his own brilliance, his path and method lead to the deepest knowledge of divine things *without any danger of error.*¹⁰⁴

He added this most grave pronouncement in which unique doctrinal authority in the Church is attributed to Aquinas,

If the doctrine of any author or saint has ever been approved at any time by Us or Our predecessors with singular commendation joined with an invitation and order to propagate and to defend it, it may easily be understood that *it was commended only insofar as it agreed with the principles of Aquinas or was in no way opposed to them.*¹⁰⁵

So, Theology as taught in Catholic schools must strictly follow the true doctrine of St. Thomas,

the master of Sacred Theology. . . . Teachers should prudently call to mind that the power to teach has been given to them not in

¹⁰⁰ Letter to Fr. Velásquez, March 7, 1909, AAS 1 (1909), 275.

¹⁰¹ Letter to Fr. Lottini, Aug. 8, 1910, AAS 2 (1910), 724.

¹⁰² Letter to Fr. Cormier, Aug. 4, 1913, *op. cit.*, 280.

¹⁰³ Motu proprio *Praeclara*, June 24, 1914, AAS 6 (1914), 335.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

¹⁰⁵ Motu proprio *Doctoris Angelici*, June 29, 1914, AAS 6 (1914).

order to pass on their own opinions to their students, but to impart to them the approved doctrines of the Church.¹⁰⁶

Furthermore,

For the more profound study of this science, as it ought to be studied in Universities and Colleges, and in all Seminaries and Institutes empowered to grant academic degrees, it is of first importance that the old system of lecturing on the actual text of the *Summa Theologica*—which should never have been allowed to fall into disuse—be revived; for the reason also that lectures on this book make it easier to understand and even to illustrate the solemn decrees of the Teaching Church and the acts which have since been passed. For, ever since the happy death of the holy Doctor, the Church has not held a single Council, but he has been present at it with the wealth of his doctrine.¹⁰⁷

And so, in order that the genuine and entire doctrine of St. Thomas may flourish in our schools, a hope which is very close to Our heart, and in order that the system of teaching be abolished which depends upon the authority and judgment of the individual teacher, and therefore has a changeable foundation whence many diverse and mutually conflicting opinions arise not without great injury to Christian learning, (Leo XIII, Letter *Qui te*, June 19, 1886) We will, order and command that teachers of Sacred Theology in Universities, Academies, Colleges, Seminaries and Institutes having the power by Apostolic indult to grant academic degrees and doctorates in that field take the *Summa Theologica* as the text for their lectures and explain it in Latin. They should also take particular care that their students develop a deep affection for the *Summa*. . . . In this way and in no other will Theology be restored to its pristine dignity, and the proper order and value will be restored to all sacred studies, and the province of the intellect and reason flower again in a second spring.¹⁰⁸

The Roman Pontiff himself explained the sense and force of his words in an audience granted the professors and students of the Angelicum College at Rome, June 28, 1914, at which we were privileged to be present. Pius X said then that he wanted no other doctrine than that of Thomas in the Church of God, in view of the fact that *his is the pure, solid, complete doctrine*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

of the Church, and more than that, the doctrine of Christ Himself and of God Himself.

From this the meaning of what he wrote a few days before to the College of St. Anselm in Rome is clearly evident:

That the privilege of conferring all the academic degrees in philosophy and theology may bear more abundant fruit for the Order and the Church, *We desire and command that the Professors of the College of St. Anselm always follow the doctrine of Aquinas in philosophy and theology*, and use the text itself in their lectures to the students of Theology who are working for degrees.¹⁰⁹

Benedict XV unhesitatingly repeated the same thought:

It is a holy and salutary practice, and practically necessary in Catholic schools where young men are acquiring a knowledge of philosophy and theology, to have Thomas Aquinas as the supreme master. Therefore, what has been most wisely determined in this matter by Our predecessors, especially Leo XIII and Pius X of happy memory, is to be retained whole and inviolate at all costs. In addition, we consider it extremely useful if the Angelic Doctor were to step out from the very sanctuary of the school, as it were, and proffer the almost divine light of his brilliance to all who desire to be more deeply learned in their religion. For it is clear that the Modernists, as they are called, have fallen into such a great variety of opinions, all distant from the faith, precisely because they have neglected the principles and teaching of St. Thomas.¹¹⁰

He wrote to Fr. Theissling:

We know as well as Our wise predecessors how to be zealous for the glory of Aquinas and We desire that this great Doctor, as he is the more viciously assailed by the heretics of our times, should on that account be more conscientiously regarded as leader and master by students for the Church in the study of philosophy and in sacred studies.¹¹¹

Indeed, he is the one "whom, as a son of Dominic, God considered worthy to illumine His Church";¹¹² for he with his

¹⁰⁹ *Motu proprio Praeclara, loc. cit.*

¹¹⁰ Letter to Fr. Hugon, May 5, 1916, AAS 8 (1916), 174.

¹¹¹ Letter of Nov. 17, 1918, AAS 10 (1918), 480.

¹¹² Encyclical *Fausto appetente*, June 29, 1921, AAS 13 (1921), 334.

marvelous wisdom and holiness bound fast to himself every lover of the true and the good. For,

Who is there devoted to serious study, with love for Holy Church joined to zeal for learning, who does not most faithfully cherish Thomas Aquinas, whose doctrine by the gift of divine providence furnishes so dependable a light for the Church to strengthen the truth and destroy error forever? *To the credit of the Order of Preachers we must add this praise, not so much that it nourished the Angelic Doctor, but that never after, even in the slightest degree, has it deviated from his doctrine.*¹¹³

To the Theological College of Bologna he wrote:

We note with approval that Thomas Aquinas is there held in a proper position of respect. Our predecessors, the illustrious Leo XIII and Pius X, extolled his doctrine with highest praise and prescribed that it be religiously retained in Catholic schools.

He strongly praised this policy. And at the same time he reminded the Theological Faculty of the obligation of holding inviolate the principles of St. Thomas and of teaching the *Summa Theologica* itself in the schools of Theology, according to the prescriptions of the *Motu proprio Doctoris Angelici*.¹¹⁴

He commanded the same in the statutes of the Roman Academy of St. Thomas Aquinas republished by his order on March 12, 1915.¹¹⁵ And on March 7, 1916 he confirmed on his own authority the decree of Pius X on using the *Summa Theologica* as the text for lectures in all the Theological Faculties of Italy and the adjacent islands:

The *Summa Theologica* must be used as the text for lectures in the scholastic part of teaching, in such a way that, together with some other text indicating the logical order of questions and containing the positive part of theology, the *Summa Theologica* is used and explained for the scholastic part of the doctrine.¹¹⁶

The theological wisdom of Aquinas holds a very high place

¹¹³ Letter to Fr. Theissling, Oct. 29, 1916, AAS 8 (1916), 397.

¹¹⁴ *Motu proprio Sacrae Theologiae*, Dec. 3, 1914, AAS (1914) 690, 691.

¹¹⁵ AAS 7 (1915), 129.

¹¹⁶ Response of the S. Cong. of Seminaries and Universities, AAS 8 (1916), 157.

not only in dogmatic and moral theology but also in Apologetics, Ascetical, and Mystical Theology, as well as in Catechetics.

In Apologetics, as the Pontiff wrote to Fr. Garrigou-La-grange:

That Aquinas has a phenomenal power for clarifying and defending Christian wisdom, is clear from your recent book *De Revelatione*. In your explanation of that part of fundamental theology called Apologetics you use the doctrine and method of St. Thomas in such a way that you singularly overcome not only the ancient but even the recent adversaries of the Christian faith.¹¹⁷

In Ascetical and Mystical Theology as well,

Everyone is aware of the power of St. Thomas' doctrine to illustrate spiritual principles in both the ascetical and mystical life, and We freely admit Our indebtedness to him on more than one occasion.¹¹⁸

For he explained most clearly the doctrine of the Scriptures and of the Saints and Fathers on the elevation to the spiritual life and the conditions necessary for progress in the grace of the virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost, of which the perfection of the mystical life is composed.¹¹⁹

In the field of Catechetics Thomas holds a high place, as is clear from the words Benedict used in his hearty congratulation of Fr. Pègues on the appearance of his French edition of the *Summa* in the form of a catechism. Using this occasion the Pontiff declared that Thomas is the Master and Doctor of the whole Church, i. e., of all the faithful, clergy, laity, the wise and the unlearned, and of all time.

The eminent commendations of Thomas Aquinas by the Holy See no longer permit a Catholic to doubt that he was divinely raised up *that the Church might have a master whose doctrine should be followed in a special way at all times*. The singular wisdom of the man seems suitable to be offered directly not only to the clergy but to all who wish to extend their study of religion, and to the

¹¹⁷ Letter of Feb. 14, 1919, AAS 11 (1919), 121.

¹¹⁸ Letter to Fr. Bernadot, Sept. 15, 1921, AAS 13 (1921), 528.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

people generally as well. For nature brings it about that the more clearly a person approaches to the light, the more fully is he illuminated.¹²⁰

Finally the Pontiff desired all these approbations and commendations to be a law for the Universal Church, preserved inviolably forever, for he inserted this prescription in the Code of Canon Law:

Professors shall teach Theology and Philosophy and train students in these studies *entirely according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor, which they shall hold inviolately.* (can. 1366, 2)

In these words, as Pius XI said, "The method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor are *clearly consecrated.*"¹²¹ and as it were, canonized.

By this law St. Thomas is truly raised to the position of teacher of the Church itself, and there is a literal fulfillment of the complete sense of that saying of Benedict XV: "The Church declared that the doctrine of Thomas is its own."¹²²

Rightly, therefore, did *Pius XI* recognize and restore the primitive title "Common Doctor of the Church" attributed to Aquinas;

Indeed, We so approve of the tributes paid to his almost divine brilliance that We believe Thomas should be called not only Angelic but even *Common or Universal Doctor of the Church*. As innumerable documents of every kind attest, the Church has adopted his doctrine for her own.¹²³

This Pontiff, following the footsteps of his predecessors,¹²⁴ added:

¹²⁰ Letter of Feb. 9, 1919, AAS 11 (1919), 71.

¹²¹ *Studiorum ducem*, loc. cit., 314.

¹²² Encyclical *Fausto appetente*, loc. cit., 332.

¹²³ *Studiorum ducem*, loc. cit.

¹²⁴ "Si, Eminenza, noi cammiremo, per quanto Iddio ci concederà, sulle orme dei nostri predecessori," Allocution to the members of the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, Cardinal Bisleti presiding, March 18, 1923, cf. M. Cordovani, O.P., "San Tommaso nella parola di Pio XI," *Angelicum* 6 (1929), 6.

What has been providentially determined in canon law on this matter should by all means be religiously and inviolately observed, since its purpose is to prepare a plenitude of priests who are equal to a task of such great magnitude.¹²⁵

Applying this to the Universities and Faculties of ecclesiastical studies in the whole Church he decreed:

Sacred Theology holds the chief place in a Theological Faculty. This study must be pursued by both a positive and a scholastic method. Therefore, when the truths of faith are explained and demonstrated from Scripture and tradition, their nature and close relation to the principles and doctrines of St. Thomas is to be investigated and clarified.¹²⁶

So that no part of the Church would remain exempted from the obligation of following Thomas, he extended the regulation to the regular clergy:

Let that, indeed, be inviolable for you which We published in agreement with Canon Law in Our Apostolic Letter on Seminaries and Clerical Studies, namely, that teachers, in teaching the principles of philosophy and theology, faithfully adhere to the scholastic method *according to the principles and doctrines of Aquinas*. Is anyone unaware how wonderfully suitable the scholastic discipline and angelic wisdom of Thomas is, which Our predecessors continually embellished with the most fulsome praise, for the purpose of explaining divine truths and refuting the errors of every age? The Angelic Doctor, so states Leo XIII, Our predecessor of immortal memory, in the encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, rich in divine and human knowledge, comparable to the sun, is responsible for the fact that he alone vanquished every error then in existence and supplied us with invincible weapons for destroying later errors which would continually arise.¹²⁷

For this reason the Pontiff expressed the greatest pleasure which the "Dogmatic Tracts" of Fr. Edward Hugon, O.P. afforded him:

¹²⁵ Apostolic Letter *Officiorum omnium*, Aug. 1, 1922. AAS 14 (1922), 454, 455.

¹²⁶ Apostolic Constitution *Deus scientiarum Dominus*, May 24, 1931. AAS 23 (1931), 253.

¹²⁷ Apostolic Letter *Unigenitus Dei Filius* to the supreme moderators of Religious Orders and of other Societies of religious men, March 19, 1924, AAS 16 (1924), 144.

Understand, dear son, that your treatises in which you explain theology for students in the form of a commentary on the principal dogmatic questions of the *Summa* of St. Thomas merit Our hearty approval, especially because you seem to have treated those very points which We not so long ago directed in an Apostolic Letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Seminaries and Universities. For you have followed, as We then advised, not only the plan and method of St. Thomas, but his doctrines and principles as well. Throughout the whole tract you have caused positive theology, as it is called, to serve scholastic theology in such a way that the latter holds the chief place, as it should. Your work does not offer merely a dry review of dogmas. Rather, it presents a true and solid body of doctrine made up of principles and conclusions. Further, We are pleased to commend the lucidity of its content and expression and the zeal which prompts you, when the occasion is offered, to inject a spark of piety into the mind of the reader by your apt comments. So, continue with eagerness to pass on sacred science by word and writing to youths studying for the priesthood, following the mind of Aquinas.¹²⁸

Not only is the clergy to be steeped in this advantageous doctrine—and on this point he congratulated the Cardinal Archbishop of Bologna, Nassali Rocca, and the professors of the Theological Faculty of Bologna for drawing wisdom from the most pure source of Aquinas in order to educate their students in accordance with the commands and exhortations of himself and his predecessor¹²⁹—but even the laity should more fully cultivate and steep themselves in Christian wisdom. For that reason he praised the bishops of the whole region of Emilia for courses provided to this end.¹³⁰ It also afforded him great pleasure that the professors of the Catholic Institute of Paris follow Thomas Aquinas as a leader in such a way that many of the clergy and educated laity taste and study his doctrine, as it were, by the right of return to former privileges.¹³¹

Indeed,

The doctrine of St. Thomas is light which descends from God and

¹²⁸ Letter of February 25, 1923. AAS 15 (1923), 209.

¹²⁹ Letter of Jan. 11, 1924. AAS 16 (1924), 90.

¹³⁰ Letter of July 4, 1925. AAS 17 (1925), 375.

¹³¹ Letter to Cardinal Luçon, Oct. 18, 1925. *Ibid.*, 574.

returns to God. Truly in this man, whose virtue and doctrine, as has been well said, made of him the most learned of the saints and the most saintly of the learned, the divine wisdom willed to imprint Its mark more broadly and to enkindle one of the most luminous rays of Its immortal light. . . . It is no wonder that the Church has made this light her own and has adorned herself with it and has illustrated her immortal doctrine with it. . . . It is no wonder that all the Popes have nobly vied with one another in exalting him, proposing him, inculcating him, as a model, master, doctor, patron and protector of all schools.

As for himself,

He will always recommend to all true friends of faith and knowledge, of natural and revealed truth, that they remain faithful to St. Thomas and his doctrine.¹³²

Truly Thomas is the Leader and Master of studies and the Universal Doctor of the Church, as the Pontiff pointed out in his Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*. He is the master in the major branches of learning, especially the sacred sciences, in which with marvelous sagacity he joins true science and piety.

This union of doctrine with piety, learning with virtue, truth with charity, is singularly manifest in the Angelic Doctor. And it is not without reason that he has been given the sun for a device, for he both brings the light of science to the mind, and at the same time fires the will with virtue. And, therefore, God the source of all sanctity and wisdom, evidently seems to have desired to point out in the case of Thomas how each of these qualities assists the other, how the practice of the virtues disposes to the contemplation of truth, and in turn, the profound consideration of truth gives lustre and perfection to the virtues.¹³³

Through the work and accomplishment of Thomas Sacred Theology was raised to the pinnacle of its dignity. This is true in apologetics, dogma and moral, ascetical and mystical, biblical and liturgical matters, as is clear from the office he composed in honor of the Holy Eucharist. He is considered to be not only the Theologian of the Holy Eucharist but its greatest prophet

¹³² Allocution to the members of the Roman Academy, *loc. cit.*

¹³³ *Loc. cit.*, 309-310.

and herald. For that reason he is also called Eucharistic Doctor.¹³⁴

St. Thomas is the bard of the Eucharist and its Doctor: *Cantor et Doctor Eucharisticus*; a poet sweet, sublime, luminous even when he employs neither verse nor meter. When he treats of the Divine Eucharist he carries us to the center which was his center, to the secret which was his secret, to the source of his purity, to the celestial food which was his angelic nourishment.¹³⁵

All these things are especially resplendent in his *Summa Theologiae* which "is heaven seen from earth."¹³⁶

In this allocution the Pontiff himself declared the real sense of how St. Thomas is the Guide of studies and Common Doctor of the Church, which title he had conferred upon Thomas in the Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*.

Guide in studies:

Of all studies and of the method in all studies. The question of method is of capital importance. In order for science to be strict and luminous, method is all-important. When the method is erroneous and the path is lost, progress is impossible; and therefore a guide is necessary. Thomas is the guide, the *Dux in via*. . . .

Of a method which teaches how to prepare, so to speak, order in the soul, which forms a sort of spiritual filing cabinet. When we have many things to keep in proper order a filing cabinet is necessary, just as a card index is kept in archives and in libraries. Intellectual compartments in which all knowledge must be stored and systematized are found in that which we call method; and St. Thomas is, in this respect, a peerless master, and therefore he is the Leader in studies.

Common Doctor:

Doctor of the whole Church, of every science, of all knowable things; a characteristic which approaches divine power. In few intellects has the participation of the divine intellect sparkled so brilliantly, for which reason we ask ourselves if the Eternal Creator

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 317-320.

¹³⁵ Allocution to the professors and students of the Angelicum College, Nov. 12, 1924, cf. *Xenia Thomistica*, III, 600-601, Rome, 1925.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 600.

ever left a deeper imprint upon other minds. In his teaching is found *par excellence* one of the characteristics of the book of life. In all circumstances of life, for all problems which can arise that book has a word and a solution to proffer us. Such is the character of the Holy Gospel because it is the word of God. Something of this divine characteristic is in St. Thomas in his classical works: the *Summa Philosophica* and the *Summa Theologica*. In these books, well read and carefully consulted, there is a word and a solution for all the questions that can be presented to us: a sure word and a word of genius; they are two books which summarize the entire universe, heaven and earth. *The Summa Theologica is heaven seen from earth, and the Summa contra Gentiles is earth seen from heaven . . .* It is for this reason that St. Thomas merited the name of *Common Doctor*.

Let him, therefore, always be your light; let his books be your constant advisers; *from his books always attain truth*: if studied wisely and tirelessly, they will furnish the reply to all your questions with immense benefit for life.¹³⁷

From this he concluded in the Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*:

Just as it was said of old to the Egyptians in time of famine: "Go to Joseph," so that they should receive a supply of corn to nourish their bodies, so to those who are now in quest of truth We now say: "Go to Thomas," that they may ask from him the food of solid doctrine of which he has an abundance to nourish their souls unto eternal life.¹³⁸

Finally, *Pius XII* following the footsteps and counsels of his predecessors stated that *those precepts found in the Code of Canon Law and in the Constitution "Deus scientiarum Dominus" relative to following and teaching the theological doctrine of St. Thomas in Catholic schools bind and have an obligatory force*, issued as they were in the manner of a decree. That doctrine, resting upon a solid rock, above and beyond the ravages of time, flourishes perpetually. It forms an invincible protection for the deposit of Catholic faith and even now safeguards it. It furnishes a safe path in leading to new investigations, and when they are completed, safely and prudently enjoys the results. In these studies "the Angelic Doctor is always a

¹³⁷ *Op. cit.*, 599-600.

¹³⁸ *Loc. cit.*, 323.

most skilled leader and is a never-failing light whose accomplishments will always remain fresh."¹³⁹ "By this road one may proceed to a safe and solid knowledge of the truth."¹⁴⁰

He admonished the members of the Society of Jesus "to observe with all diligence their laws which command them to follow the doctrine of St. Thomas as being more solid, safe, approved and consonant with their Constitutions."¹⁴¹

"*These things have the force of law, which bind all Catholic schools of philosophy and theology,*"¹⁴² and therefore are to be observed by all as sacred and inviolable. He declared to the students of the regular and secular clergy pursuing sacred studies at Rome:

It is that wisdom of Aquinas which collected the truths of human reason, illustrated them with brilliance, and most aptly and solidly unified them into a wonderful whole. It is the wisdom of Aquinas which is especially suited to declare and defend the dogmas of the faith. And finally it is his wisdom which was able to refute effectively the basic errors continually arising, and conquer them invincibly. Wherefore, dear sons, bring to St. Thomas a heart full of love and zeal. With all your powers strive to explore with your intellect his excellent doctrine. *Freely embrace whatever clearly pertains to it and is supported by a solid reason found in it.*¹⁴³

Aquinas, the Angelic and Common Doctor, like the sea receiving into himself the rivers of wisdom from all who lived before his time, and whatever human reason had attained by thought and mental labor, so composed and ordered all of it in a wonderful manner and with brilliant clearness after exposing it to the supernal light emanating from the Gospel, that he seems to have left to his successors the power to imitate but to have taken away the power to surpass. The doctrine of Thomas not only was most apt for destroying ancient heresies, and for that reason stands forth as the champion of faith and firm bulwark of religion, but also

¹³⁹ Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, Sept. 22, 1946. AAS 38 (1946), 387-388.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Allocution to the Jesuit General Congregation September 17, 1946, AAS 38 (1946), 380.

¹⁴² Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, *loc. cit.*

¹⁴³ June 24, 1939. AAS 31 (1939). 246.

offers the most powerful weapon for destroying thoroughly errors which are being reborn in perpetual succession and which wear the garb of newness.

Therefore, all who attend Catholic schools of any type should cherish, revere and imitate Thomas Aquinas as a heavenly patron, *those especially who study him in philosophy and theology, and specifically students divinely called to the priesthood and growing into the hope of the Church, ought to follow Thomas as leader and master*, recalling that there is an innate excellence in Thomistic doctrine and a singular force and power to cure the evils which afflict our age.¹⁴⁴

Those things which in our day have been foolishly and erroneously proposed by certain people on the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church, could have been avoided if they had followed Aquinas in the matter. For examination of this doctrine

should have taken into account the very lucid opinions of masters of scholastic theology and especially the Angelic and Common Doctor, for they had discoursed on this point. You surely realize that his arguments closely correspond to the thought of the Fathers. Those arguments add nothing new but merely comment, by way of explanation, upon the divine words of Scripture.¹⁴⁵

Similarly, the doctrine and deeper investigation of biblical inspiration, resting on the principles of the Angelic Doctor, offers new aids and insights for exegesis. The Pontiff said:

Among other things, this seems to deserve special mention. Catholic theologians following the doctrine of the Fathers and *especially that of the Angelic and Common Doctor*, have examined and explained the nature and effects of biblical inspiration more exactly and more fully than was wont to be done in previous ages. For having begun by expounding minutely the principle that the inspired writer, in composing the sacred book, is the living and reasonable instrument of the Holy Spirit, they rightly observe that, impelled by the divine motion, he so uses his faculties and powers, that from the books composed by him all may easily infer the special character of each one and, as it were, his personal traits.

¹⁴⁴ Letter to Fr. Gillet, March 7, 1942, AAS 34 (1942), 97.

¹⁴⁵ Encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, June 29, 1943. AAS 35 (1943), 208.

Let the interpreter then, with all care and without neglecting any light derived from recent research, endeavor to determine the peculiar character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, the sources written or oral to which he had recourse and the forms of expression he employed.¹⁴⁶

Further on he says,

For of the modes of expression which, among ancient peoples, and especially those of the East, human language used to express its thought, none is excluded from the Sacred Books, provided the way of speaking adopted in no wise contradicts the holiness and truth of God, as, with his customary wisdom, the Angelic Doctor already observed in these words. 'In Scripture divine things are presented to us in the manner which is in common use amongst men.' (*Comment. ad Hebr.*, Cap. 1. lect. 4) (For as the substantial Word of God became like to men in all things, except sin, so the words of God, expressed in human language, are made like to human speech in every respect, except error.¹⁴⁷

The same may be said on the question of so-called "humanism" concerning which some speak today at great length, though not always aptly.

Humanism is now the order of the day. Undoubtedly it is not an easy task to extract and recognize a clear idea of its nature in the course of its historical evolution. Nevertheless—although humanism has for long had the pretension of being formally opposed to the Middle Ages which preceded it—it is none the less certain that *everything it contains of truth, of goodness, of the great and the eternal, belongs to the spiritual universe of the greatest genius of the Middle Ages, Saint Thomas Aquinas*. In its general characteristics, the concept of man and of the world as it appears in the Christian and Catholic perspective, remains essentially identical with itself: the same in St. Augustine as in St. Thomas or Dante; the same again in contemporary Christian Philosophy. The obscurity of certain philosophical or theological questions, which have been illuminated and gradually resolved in the course of the centuries, detracts in no way from the reality of this fact.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*, Sept. 30, 1943. AAS 35 (1943), 314.

¹⁴⁷ *Loc. cit.*, 315-316.

¹⁴⁸ Allocation to the Congress on Humanistic Studies, Rome, Sept. 25, 1949. AAS 41 (1949), 555.

With new errors or at least the danger of error arising, the Pontiff is more insistent in urging a return to St. Thomas and more strongly commands fidelity in the observance of the Church's precept on following the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor. This is clear from his Encyclical *Humani Generis*, Aug. 12, 1950. To those present at the Third International Thomistic Congress in Rome he said,

This represents a safe path for you who are engaged in discussion and publication; follow the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, which lights up the road like a brilliant ray of sun.¹⁴⁹

Indeed,

Heaven is distant from the earth in the same degree that the truths of divine revelation exceed the powers of the human mind. They are loftier than those powers of mind but not in the least contradictory or repugnant to them. They are above reason but not opposed to it. With infectious eagerness St. Thomas leads human intelligence, hesitating and dubious by reason of the brilliant splendor, into the very temple of the mysteries of God. Producing the solution to problems by the artistry of his arguments, he brings out the clear and splendid harmony existing between divine and human things.

How sharply the contest waxes at present in fixing reasons used both in faith and in philosophy, is shown in Our Encyclical Letter mentioned above. We published it with this plan and purpose in mind, to preserve the deposit of Catholic faith whole, untarnished and uninjured. Discuss among yourselves those questions which We touched on in Our letter, and afterwards pass the results on to the studious youths whom you are teaching. Always follow that inspiration by which the Angelic Doctor learned the truth, namely, by the greater effort of intelligence and by religious piety. Treat these matters thoroughly, insisting upon his method, by which he always defined the limits and content of his opinions, with no useless flow of words but with serious and solid discourse.¹⁵⁰

In the Apostolic Exhortation to all the Clergy on Sept. 23, 1950, he concludes:

Wherefore, lest the zeal of sacred ministers be miserably subject to change and hesitation, We particularly urge you, Venerable

¹⁴⁹ Sept. 17, 1950. AAS 42 (1950), 734.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 735.

Brethren, to be especially vigilant in insuring that those special regulations for such studies which this Holy See has established be received and preserved with complete fidelity.¹⁵¹

In the Preface for the Mass of St. Thomas, which the Holy Father himself wrote, he gives thanks to God and addresses Him in these words: "Who wished to raise up in Thy Church the blessed Doctor Thomas, truly Angelic by reason of his pure life and sublime mind; that he might communicate his solid and salutary doctrine and illuminate the Church like the sun; whose wisdom, *especially commended to all*, is admired by the whole world."¹⁵²

Weighing and considering all these points together it must be candidly and ungrudgingly admitted that *the Church concedes the highest theological authority to Thomas alone over the other ecclesiastical writers of all times. Therefore, his canonical authority in the field of theology is truly the greatest over each and every one of the Fathers and Doctors.*

With good reason, then, Fr. Salaverri, S. J. wrote that: "in Theology . . . the authority of St. Thomas is *entirely matchless and greater than that of any other Doctor or Theologian in the Catholic Church.*"¹⁵³ And again, "the authority . . . of St. Thomas, which may be called canonical, *is greater than the authority of any other Catholic theologian.*"¹⁵⁴

2. In Philosophy

When the minds of philosophers were accepting the Catholic faith and exercising the task of philosophy with due reverence for the truths held by faith, there was no necessity for the Teaching Authority of the Church to protect natural reason and Philosophy itself.

But from the time of the Renaissance, as it is called, and especially the Reformation, when philosophers did not hesitate

¹⁵¹ *Menti Nostrae*, AAS 42 (1950), 688.

¹⁵² Dominican Missal, Preface of the Mass of St. Thomas.

¹⁵³ *De Ecclesia Christi*, no. 872, p. 757. Madrid, 1950.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 874, p. 758.

“to philosophize without any regard whatever to the faith, asking, and conceding in return, the right to invent anything that they can think of, and anything that they please,”¹⁵⁵ philosophy gradually degenerated into a seminary of errors, and philosophers into artisans fashioning arguments against the true faith. The noble exercise of the mind reached such a low state that it finally attacked reason itself, and Philosophy, so-called, began to devour itself. This condition of Philosophy accurately fulfilled the axiom of Aquinas: Philosophy “is wisdom only as long as it is subject to divine wisdom; but when it withdraws from God, it becomes foolishness.”¹⁵⁶ This especially resulted from Kant’s critique.

And so, in order to cleanse reason and philosophy as grace does fallen nature, the Teaching Authority of the Church eagerly and seriously concerned itself with the restoration and renovation of true Christian philosophy. First, by the ordinary *magisterium*, Gregory XVI and Pius IX spoke out against the errors of fideism or extreme traditionalism on the one hand, and rationalism, ontologism and pantheism on the other. Then the Vatican Council solemnly condemned the same errors, especially those relating to revelation and faith, and the motives of credibility, and also the relation between faith and reason. In its deliberations the Council very accurately distinguished and affirmed the complete lack of opposition between reason and faith, philosophy and theology, the natural and the supernatural orders.

To cure these errors arising from the abuse of Philosophy, the Fathers stated that no means was better suited than the reestablishment of a true and healthy philosophy, which had reached its peak of perfection in St. Thomas Aquinas. Then, after the Council was temporarily adjourned due to the state of world affairs, the several Fathers began to send letters to Pope Pius IX asking and begging him to declare Thomas Patron of all Catholic Schools. These Fathers said in their discussions

¹⁵⁵ *Aeterni Patris*, loc. cit., 68.

¹⁵⁶ *Comment. in I Cor.*, cap. 15, lect. 5.

about this that, since the impurities of every kind of error flowed from a disrespect for the teaching authority of the Angelic Doctor, they would be dispersed if he were established and accepted as Patron of Schools. Eminent among the Fathers urging this were Cardinals Riario Sforza of Naples and Joachim Pecci of Perugia, both of whom assisted at the Vatican Council and took a large part in its affairs.

However, Pius IX died on Feb. 18, 1878, and on the 20th, Cardinal Pecci was elected as his successor, taking the name of *Leo XIII*. In assuming the Supreme Pontificate he bent all his energy to restoring, urging, spreading, and even by his Apostolic authority prescribing a safe and healthy philosophy:

"the more energetically the enemies of religion attempt to suggest to simple men and youths that they learn those things which becloud the mind and corrupt morals, so much the more readily must we lean upon not only a suitable and approved method of instruction, but the very content of the instruction must strictly conform to the Catholic faith in letter and in spirit. This should be especially true in philosophy upon which correct procedure in other sciences very greatly depends. The purpose of philosophy is not to undermine divine revelation but rather to pave the road for it, and defend it from enemies, as the great Augustine, the Angelic Doctor and other masters of Christian wisdom have taught us by their example and writings."¹⁵⁷

That this is especially true of the philosophy of St. Thomas, he signified to the scholarly A. Uccelli, who edited, from autograph manuscripts, the *Summa contra Gentiles*:

We are very grateful to you for having contributed your care and effort to this remarkable work, in which the holy Doctor pours out from a rich vein the treasures of a profound philosophy, and supplies very timely weapons to refute the errors of the age.¹⁵⁸

The famous Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* of August 4, 1879 had as its special purpose to inculcate the philosophy of Aquinas and to prescribe that it be followed.

¹⁵⁷ Encyclical *Inscrutabili*, April 21, 1878. *Acta, ed. cit.* I, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Letter of Dec. 7, 1879, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.* 178.

Indeed, if one should examine the evils which afflict our age, he would easily discover that the fruitful cause both of those which we now suffer and those which we greatly fear is depraved knowledge of human and divine things. Such knowledge, long poured out from the schools of philosophers, has crept into every level of society, and it has been received with the common applause of very many. Since it is natural for man to follow reason as the guide of his actions, if the understanding go wrong in anything, his will easily follows. This is the way that perverse ideas, residing in the mind, influence human actions and pervert them. On the contrary, if the mind of man be healthy and strongly grounded in solid and true principles, many benefits would accrue to both the public and private good.¹⁵⁹

While it is true that the whole salvation of the human race should not be expected from philosophy, since that depends upon the grace of God through Jesus Christ, still,

Natural aids should neither be despised nor undervalued, for the providence of divine wisdom disposing all things strongly and sweetly, supplies the human race with those aids. Among them the right use of philosophy is clearly the most important.¹⁶⁰

True and sound philosophy renders *three* kinds of assistance to the Catholic religion. *Firstly*, philosophy paves the way for it in the proof for the preambles of the Faith, namely, the existence of one personal God, distinct from the world, Who is omnipotent and can neither deceive nor be deceived. This supplies the basis for the rational credibility of divine revelation. The consequence should be, then, that if God speaks to men, they should give the full assent of their minds. That He has actually spoken to men is abundantly clear from the many miracles performed by God Himself to support His word. Human reason is manifestly capable of knowing the existence and probative force of such miracles with reference both to the credibility of divinely revealed doctrine and the fact that it should be believed.

Secondly, when by faith the divinely revealed mysteries are

¹⁵⁹ *Aeterni Patris, loc. cit., 44.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

accepted, philosophy helps, in various ways, to understand and explain them in its function as the instrument of the science of faith which is called Sacred Theology. Indeed, to use the words of the same Pontiff:

The constant and varied use of philosophy is required that sacred theology may assume and wear the nature, habit and character of true science. For in this noblest of the sciences it is especially necessary that the many and different parts of heavenly doctrine be gathered together, as it were, into one body. Thus they are united by a union of harmony among themselves, all the parts being fittingly arranged, and derived from their own proper principles. Finally, each and every part is strengthened by its own unanswerable arguments.

Nor must we pass over in silence, or reckon of little account that more accurate and fuller knowledge of our belief and, as far as may be, that somewhat clearer understanding of the mysteries of the faith which St. Augustine and the other Fathers both praised and labored to attain and which the Vatican Council itself¹⁶¹ decreed to be most fruitful. Such knowledge and understanding are certainly acquired more fully and easily by those who join to integrity of life and study of the faith a mind that has been disciplined by philosophical culture. Especially is this so since the same Vatican Council teaches that we ought to seek for understanding of holy dogmas of that kind both from the analogy of the things which are naturally known and also from the way in which the mysteries themselves are related to one another, and also to the ultimate end of man.¹⁶²

Lastly, this also

is the task of philosophy, to guard with religious care all truths that come to us by Divine tradition, and to resist all who dare to attack them. Philosophy enjoys high repute because it holds the position of bulwark of the faith and strong defense of religion.¹⁶³

These three duties and offices of reason and philosophy toward the Catholic religion, already clearly indicated by Thomas,¹⁶⁴ are completely and accurately fulfilled by the philosophy of Thomas himself.

¹⁶¹ Dogmatic Constitution *de Fide Catholica*, cap. 4.

¹⁶² *Aeterni Patris*, loc. cit., 50.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 3 c.

Every true and sound fruit of reason which the Fathers and other ecclesiastical writers discovered in the field of philosophy over the course of centuries Thomas has gathered unto himself as into a sea and embellished in many ways by his own work. He fashioned a body of philosophy which is complete, sound, unified and ever powerful, in that it is based on principles so solid and universal that they penetrate and even anticipate all time and change. The result is that he encloses within his grasp an almost infinite number of truths to be opened up later masters at the proper time and with much fruit. He alone destroyed all errors, ancient, modern and future or, at least, he certainly supplies invincible weapons to destroy them.

Moreover, carefully distinguishing reason and faith, as is right, and yet joining them together in a harmony of friendship, he so guarded the rights of each, and so watched over the dignity of each, that, as far as man is concerned, reason can now hardly rise higher than she has risen, borne up in the flight of Thomas; and faith can hardly gain more helps and greater helpers from reason than those which Thomas has given her.¹⁶⁵

There is no sounder and safer philosophical doctrine and one which is more in accord with the Teaching Authority of the Church than that which is contained in the volumes of Thomas.¹⁶⁶

No one ever so well demonstrated the existence, nature and attributes of God and the other preambles to the faith, as is clear from an examination of the *Summa contra Gentiles* alone. In the same work he also prepared a defense of the Catholic faith more powerful than all others. Finally, no one ever offered such true, sound and deep elucidations and explanations of the mysteries of faith based on analogy and the connections of the mysteries one with another and with the ultimate end of man, as is set forth in his *Summa Theologiae*.

Therefore, the philosophy of St. Thomas is to be established and vigorously promoted in Catholic Schools, and teachers are required to teach it and students must accept it.

¹⁶⁵ *Aeterni Patris, loc. cit., 64.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid., 70.*

We earnestly urge all of you, Venerable Brethren, to restore the golden wisdom of St. Thomas and spread it as far as you can, for the safety and glory of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, for the increase of all the sciences.¹⁶⁷

Indeed,

There is nothing which We have longer wished for and desired than you should give largely and abundantly to youths engaged in study the pure streams of wisdom which flow from the Angelic Doctor as from a perennial and copious spring.¹⁶⁸

Moreover,

Let teachers carefully chosen by you endeavor to instil the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in the minds of their hearers and *let them clearly point out its solidity and excellence above all other teaching*.¹⁶⁹

He also gave this grave warning:

Lest the false should be drunk instead of the true; or lest that which is unwholesome should be drunk instead of that which is pure, take care that the wisdom of Thomas be drawn from his own fountain, or at any rate from those streams which, in the certain and unanimous opinion of learned men, yet flow whole and untainted, inasmuch as they are fed from the fountain itself. But take care to shield the minds of youths from streams which are said to have flowed from thence, but in reality have been fed by unhealthy waters from other springs.¹⁷⁰

In this Letter, as he himself often recalled later, he stated and clearly proved,

That the best form of philosophy is that developed by the brilliant genius of St. Thomas Aquinas in such a way that it will never die. For he carefully searched it out in all the works of ancient wisdom.¹⁷¹

What We have often striven to impress upon you before, *We now repeat, that no method of philosophy is more suited to reach the truth or more powerful to destroy growing errors than the method of that blessed and most wise man*.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ Allocution to the International Congress of Scholars at Rome, March 7, 1880. Cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 205.

¹⁷² Letter to D. Mercier, President of the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie at the University of Louvain, Jan. 2, 1895, *op. cit.*, 258.

In this way,

While We have recommended adherence to the doctrine of St. Thomas for the deliberate purpose of restoring soundness to philosophy, Our special purpose is to use it as a sword cutting at the root of present evils.¹⁷³

For, by his principles and method of philosophy, he has a marvelous power to illustrate every facet of the truth and destroy every kind of error, even those engendered by the very difficult times in which we live.¹⁷⁴

Therefore,

We propose as a model one in whom virtue and wisdom shine with a maximum of splendor; a man fully imbued with human and divine learning drawn from the treasury of the ages; one celebrated by the praises of the Church and the approval of the Roman Pontiffs; one made equal in mind to the angels.¹⁷⁵

It was with the highest approval that this letter and these recommendations of the Supreme Pastor were received by the Cardinals, Bishops, Superiors of Religious Orders, Faculties of Philosophy, Seminaries and learned Catholic men throughout the world. Representatives sent letters attesting to their admiration of and veneration for the doctrine of St. Thomas. Practically by referendum, Aquinas was recognized and proclaimed as the Prince of Philosophers and Universal Doctor.

Motivated by these letters and by others forwarded to Pius IX, Leo XIII declared St. Thomas Patron of all Universities, Colleges, Lycea and Catholic Schools:

"for they [the letters] have made clear to him as well as to Ourselves that there is inherent in Thomistic doctrine a certain outstanding excellence as well as a phenomenal force and power calculated to cure the evils which afflict our times."¹⁷⁶

This is the chief and supreme reason which moved the Pontiff to decree for Thomas that,

¹⁷³ Letter to the Bishop of Piacenza, Oct. 9, 1882, *op. cit.*, 223.

¹⁷⁴ Letter to Fr. Coconier, July 12, 1894, *op. cit.*, 257.

¹⁷⁵ Allocution to the International Congress of Scholars, *loc. cit.*

¹⁷⁶ Brief *Cum hoc sit*, declaring St. Thomas Aquinas Patron of Catholic Schools, *loc. cit.*, 110.

*St. Thomas is preeminent among all. Catholic men regard him as the exemplar in the various branches of knowledge. Indeed, magnificent ornaments of mind and soul, inviting imitation by others, are all present in him: complete, pure and well-ordered doctrine; obedience to the faith and the finest harmony with divinely revealed truths; integrity of life united with the splendor of the greatest virtues.*¹⁷⁷

Nor was the Roman Pontiff satisfied with these solemn pronouncements. Great energy and purpose marked his continuous efforts to recommend the doctrine of Aquinas. He founded the Roman Academy named after St. Thomas

to explain and expound his work; to set forth his opinions and compare them with the opinions of ancient and modern philosophers; to show the force of his opinions and his reasons for them; to strive to spread his salutary doctrine and apply it both to the refutation of modern errors and to those which would arise in the future.

He was careful to see that in the Roman Faculties and Seminaries "philosophical studies according to the mind and principles of the Angelic Doctor were being cherished and taught simply, clearly and fully."¹⁷⁹ By his own order and at his own expense he published a new critical edition "which embraces all the writings of the holy Doctor," together with the commentaries of Cajetan and Ferrariensis on the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*, through which, "as through many rivulets, the doctrine of this great man might flow."¹⁸⁰ He continually urged Bishops, Religious Superiors and all scholars throughout the Catholic world to do likewise in the seminaries and schools under their care:

Endeavor to spread further every day the doctrine of such a great master; in studying his doctrine keep this regulation in mind, that *you should embrace any given opinion because it recommends*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁷⁸ Letter to Cardinal de Luca, *de Romana S. Thomae Academia*, Oct. 15, 1879, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 197.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 199, 200.

*itself freely to you on account of his wonderful propriety and simplicity of speech, and not because you have been perhaps persuaded by some prejudiced opinion foreign to common and approved doctrine.*¹⁸¹

To the President and Students of the Academy of St. Thomas at Parma he wrote:

You can choose no safer guide for your work than St. Thomas, whose shining sanctity joined with brilliant genius and penetration surpassing the human level, has earned for him the fitting tribute of Angelic Doctor;¹⁸² and he seems to have abundantly filled the measure of that name.¹⁸³

In him are all the qualities which establish him as the Guide and Teacher of a healthy and true philosophy. He has the correct method of philosophy; philosophical doctrine which is sound, mature, strong and safe; universal and fruitful principles touching the chief problems of all times and offering the answers to them; a compact, clear, serious style; an understanding manner toward all philosophers, yet with perfect freedom to disapprove of their opinions and advance others; and the finest harmony with divinely revealed truth.

His philosophical method. His doctrine "always retains its great power to stimulate wisely the minds of men."¹⁸⁴

It was for this reason that We have advised and frequently and seriously urged that the works of the great Aquinas be kept at hand and continuously and fittingly expounded . . . because *the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor has been wonderfully fashioned to form minds and is equally useful for a commentator, philosopher or one who would dispute succinctly and invincibly*: he clearly proves individual points, one depending upon the other in a continuous series. He shows that all of them are connected and joined one with another. He relates them all to one basic principle; then he lifts one up to the contemplation of God, Who is the efficient

¹⁸¹ Allocution to the Int. Congress of Scholars, *loc. cit.*, 206.

¹⁸² Letter of June 21, 1880, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 208.

¹⁸³ Letter to Cardinal de Luca, *op. cit.*, 197.

¹⁸⁴ Letter to the Bishops of the provinces of Milan, Turin and Vercelli, Jan. 25, 1882, *op. cit.*, 222.

cause, source, and archetype of all things, to Whom all philosophy, and indeed every man, should be related.¹⁸⁵

He is strong in his praise of B. Lorenzelli who had already dedicated himself entirely to the teaching of Aquinas, stating that he set forth Thomas' method of treatment and admirable system of philosophy, in which he excelled, in his *Philosophiae Theoreticae Institutiones*.¹⁸⁶ He also sent hearty congratulations to the Professors of the Faculty of Philosophy of Catholic University in Washington:

*Epecially because they purposely maintain in its entirety the established system of philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas according to Our precept and religiously follow him as guide.*¹⁸⁷ Wisdom in philosophy is exactly proportioned to the degree in which Thomas is followed.¹⁸⁸ For his is the truest and most suitable of all the systems of philosophy and We wish all to use that system whether they are teaching or learning.¹⁸⁹

The body of his doctrine is solid, mature, strong and safe.

His doctrine is so inclusive that he has embraced within himself as in a sea all the wisdom flowing from the ancients. Whatever truth was spoken or discussed by pagan philosophers, by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, by great men who lived before him, he not only thoroughly investigated but augmented, perfected and disposed with such a clear penetration of ideas, such an accurate system of argumentation, such an economy of speech, that he appears only to have left the power to imitate but not to excel. . . . He stands invincible, strengthening his arguments by the force of reason, and striking great terror in the minds of his adversaries.¹⁹⁰

His full and fruitful principles embrace the special problems of all times and offer their solution.

¹⁸⁵ *Officio sanctissimo*, Encyclical Letter to the Bavarian Hierarchy, December 22, 1887, *op. cit.*, 234.

¹⁸⁶ Letter of Dec. 3, 1895, *op. cit.*, 261.

¹⁸⁷ Letter to Cardinal Gibbons, June 29, 1895, *op. cit.*, 260.

¹⁸⁸ Letter to Cardinal Bataglini, Nov. 20, 1890, *op. cit.*, 239.

¹⁸⁹ Letter to Cardinal Deschamps, Dec. 25, 1880, *op. cit.*, 215.

¹⁹⁰ Brief *Cum hoc sit*, *loc. cit.*, 112.

This is an outstanding point about his doctrine, that, being based upon and arranged according to principles which have the widest extension, it is not limited to one period only but is adaptable to the needs of all times, and is especially suited to overcome the constant rise of error.¹⁹¹

The Angelic Doctor, in his speculations, drew certain philosophical conclusions as to the reasons and principles of created things. These conclusions have the very widest reach, and contain, as it were, in their bosom the seeds of truths well-nigh infinite in number. These have to be unfolded with most abundant fruits in their own time by the teachers who come after him. As he used his method of philosophy, not only in teaching the truth, but also in refuting error, he has gained this prerogative for himself. With his own hand he vanquished all errors of ancient times; and still he supplies an armory of weapons which brings us certain victory in the conflict with falsehoods ever springing up in the course of years.¹⁹²

His style is serious, succinct and clear.

He employs a quiet style and serious manner of speech, not only when he is teaching a truth and composing an argument but also when pursuing and pressing upon his adversaries.¹⁹³

Very recently Pius XII proposed this form of argumentation to philosophers for imitation:

Proceed strictly according to his method, for he always defined the content and limits of his opinions, without useless verbiage, but with sober and solid expression and evident precision.¹⁹⁴

For this reason he praised the celebrated Anthony Muratori who possessed a similar style of presentation:

he discarded that inflated form of writing then in vogue as well as bombastic, fancy and lengthy forms of expression which were also frequently employed; instead he fashioned for his use a style and

¹⁹¹ *Aeterni Patris, loc. cit.*, 62.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Letter to Cardinal Deschamps and the Belgian Bishops, Aug. 3, 1881, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 220.

¹⁹⁴ Allocution to the Third Int. Thomistic Congress, *loc. cit.*, 735.

type of writing which was unadorned yet compact, strong and penetrating.¹⁹⁵

His gentleness toward every philosopher coupled with a perfect freedom to disagree and to bring forward some new solution. So, that philosophy of the greatest of all philosophers, Aristotle,

the Angelic Doctor interpreted in an uniquely brilliant manner. He made that philosophy Christian when he purged it of the errors into which a pagan writer could easily fall; he used these very errors in his exposition and vindication of Catholic truth. Among the important advances which the Church owes to the great Aquinas this certainly should be included, that so nicely did he harmonize Christian truth with the enduring peripatetic philosophy that he made Aristotle cease to be an adversary and become, instead, a militant supporter for Christ.¹⁹⁶

Indeed, one should embrace the truths discovered by others in such a way that new truths are sought at the same time.

It is true that in these days too many find their praise for genius in a contempt for antiquity; nevertheless, *that is evidently the best system of philosophy which endeavors by rational procedure to discover new truths without at the same time discarding the wisdom of the ancients.*¹⁹⁷

The marvelous harmony with divinely revealed truths.

The holy Doctor clearly proves that truths springing from the natural order cannot contradict those which are believed by faith: consequently, the support and cultivation of the Christian faith is not a mean and servile function of reason, but rather its noble obedience by which the mind is aided and educated in a loftier realm of truth. Finally, science and faith both coming from God should not exercise a rivalry of dissension but, bound together by the ties of friendship, should offer help to each other. An outstanding example of this wonderful harmony and concordance is

¹⁹⁵ Letter to the Archbishop of Modena, Feb. 15, 1950. AAS 42 (1950) 297.

¹⁹⁶ Brief *Gravissime nos*, to the Jesuit Fathers, Dec. 30, 1892, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 247.

¹⁹⁷ Letter to the publisher Louis Vives on the occasion of his new edition of the works of St. Albert the Great, Dec. 10, 1889, *op. cit.*, 237.

found in all the writings of St. Thomas. In them that harmony shines brilliantly; at one time reason predominates, with faith leading the way in the investigation of nature; at another time faith takes the lead defended and supported by reason, in such a way that each maintains inviolate its proper force and dignity. When a problem so demands, both join together, having made a compact, as it were, to destroy the enemies of each.¹⁹⁸

Hence the best philosophers are they who join philosophical study with the obedience of the Christian Faith. Thus the brightness of Christian truths falls on the mind, and by that brightness the understanding itself is helped. This takes nothing from the dignity of the reason; nay, rather, it adds to the reason a great deal of grandeur and subtlety and strength.¹⁹⁹

Therefore, *those who wish to be true philosophers . . . should take the principles and foundations of their doctrine from Thomas Aquinas.*²⁰⁰ To follow his leadership is praiseworthy: ²⁰¹ on the contrary, to depart foolishly and rashly from the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor is something far from Our mind and fraught with peril . . . the name of Thomas . . . should be held sacred by all.²⁰²

But if other authors "should depart from the doctrine of the Common Doctor, there must be no dispute as to which is the right way," namely, the way of Aquinas.²⁰³

Further, to follow Thomas as guide is not only a laudable privilege but a duty as well, and a most pressing duty at that:

For those who apply themselves to the teaching and study of Theology and Philosophy *should consider it their capital duty, having left aside the findings of a fruitless philosophy, to follow St. Thomas Aquinas and to cherish him as their master and their leader.*²⁰⁴

Let it be a law for teachers as well as students to follow Thomas

¹⁹⁸ Brief *Cum hoc sit*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁹⁹ *Aeterni Patris*, *loc. cit.*, 54.

²⁰⁰ Letter to the Minister General of the Friars Minor, Nov. 25, 1898, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 264.

²⁰¹ Letter to Bishop Haine, Aug. 8, 1899, *ibid.*

²⁰² Letter to the Minister General O.F.M., *loc. cit.*

²⁰³ *Gravissime nos*, *op. cit.*, 248.

²⁰⁴ Letter to the Bishop of Verdun, Oct. 1, 1901. *Acta* VI, 273-274.

*Aquinas as their guide and cherish and protect his doctrine from all impurity.*²⁰⁵

In no sense is this to be construed as a curtailment of one's freedom to investigate truth. Rather it directs that liberty in a safe manner and preserves it intact.

Human reason should exercise a *free* hand in its effort to penetrate to the interior and hidden knowledge of things, nor can it be otherwise; indeed, *following Aquinas as leader and guide it does so more freely and expeditiously, because then reason acts most securely since it is entirely free from the danger of exceeding the safety of the faith.*

You would erroneously call that freedom, which follows and spreads opinions at choice and at random. Rather it is the worst kind of license, lying and false knowledge, the slavery and blight of the soul. Thomas, the wise Doctor, moves within the bounds of truth, for he never takes issue with God, the highest principle of all truth. To Him he always clings and he follows Him most closely as He opens His divine secrets.²⁰⁶ Thomas' doctrine, as it is the most eminent and wholesome of all, approved for secular use and praised above others by the Church, not only does not coerce the mind but rather supplies pure and salutary food.²⁰⁷

There is no better course of study, no safer system of philosophy, no stronger instrument for sharpening the mind in its investigation of truth. Leo XIII repeated this again and again at every opportunity. He wrote to Cardinal Deschamps, upon the establishment of a Chair of Thomistic Philosophy at the University of Louvain,

Devote your efforts to studying the masters wisely, to nourishing the important studies vigilantly, and *be definitely assured that the course of studies will be better as it more closely approaches the doctrine of the same Aquinas.*²⁰⁸

We have often said that *the course of studies will be better as it more closely approaches the doctrine of the same Aquinas.*²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ *Motu proprio* instituting the Leonine Commission, Aug. 22, 1897, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 263.

²⁰⁶ Letter to the Bavarian Hierarchy, *loc. cit.*

²⁰⁷ *Gravissime nos*, *loc. cit.*, 246.

²⁰⁸ Letter of Dec. 25, 1880, *op. cit.*, 216.

²⁰⁹ Letter to Fr. De Maria, Jan. 14, 1893, *op. cit.*, 252.

Those, indeed, will become finished and accurate philosophers who have been deeply steeped in the scholastic method and study. We have repeatedly and seriously admonished and mentioned to you on other occasions, that *the course of studies will be better as it approaches more closely to the doctrine of Aquinas.*²¹⁰

In an allocution to the moderators and students of the Seminaries and Faculties of Rome he said:

We seem to have acted with good purpose and opportunity, when, having in mind the acquisition of greater knowledge of things, We recalled the studies of clerics to the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. In this matter We repeat in your presence today what We have said clearly and repeatedly in Our Letters: *follow the Angelic Doctor as guide and teacher; consider yourselves, beloved sons, to have come closer to doctrinal excellence as you devote more effort and study to him.*²¹¹

His successor, *Pius X*, commanded exact observance of all these precepts:

We take the lead in saying that all those regulations must be religiously observed which Our illustrious predecessor determined in the study of Thomistic philosophy and doctrine, and We shall take care to promote the hope for even greater fruit.²¹²

And therefore,

All who teach philosophy in Catholic schools throughout the world . . . , *should take care never to depart from the path and method of Aquinas, and to insist upon that procedure more vigorously every day.*²¹³

He gives special advice on this matter to the Catholic Institutes in France²¹⁴ and specifically to the Institute at Paris:

²¹⁰ Letter to Cardinal Goossens on the Institut Supérieur de Philosophie at Louvain, March 7, 1894, *op. cit.*, 256.

²¹¹ Allocution of Jan. 18, 1885, *op. cit.*, 226.

²¹² Apostolic Letter *In praeceptis* on the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, *loc. cit.*, 126.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ Circular Letter of the Sacred Congregation of Studies to the Rectors of the Catholic Institutes of Angers, Lyons, Lisle, Paris and Toulouse, Sept. 10, 1906. *Acta*, II, 291-292.

On the subject of philosophy We wish you never to allow that the regulations providentially set forth by Our predecessor in the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris* be less strictly observed in your seminaries. *This is a matter of very great consequence for the protection and safety of the faith.*

It is not enough to imbue the students for Sacred Orders with that philosophy corresponding to the official programs of the State, but they should be more fully and deeply instructed "according to the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas so that they can receive solid knowledge of sacred theology and biblical science."²¹⁵

He suggested the same thing more solemnly in his Encyclical Letter *Pascendi dominici gregis* of Sept. 8, 1907 against the doctrines of the Modernists, especially in the field of metaphysics.

In the matter of studies We wish and at this time command that Scholastic philosophy be made the basis for sacred studies . . . Specifically when We prescribe that Scholastic philosophy is to be followed We mean especially that philosophy which is taught by Thomas Aquinas: *We state that whatever was sanctioned by Our predecessor on this point is still in force, and whatever We have done by way of encouragement and confirmation, We order that it be followed by all religiously.* It is the business of the bishops, in whatever seminaries these points have been neglected, to see what they are encouraged and required hereafter. We prescribe the same for Moderators of Religious Orders. *We warn teachers to keep this religiously in mind, especially in metaphysics, that to disregard Aquinas cannot be done without suffering great harm.*²¹⁶

He repeated this in his *Motu proprio Sacrorum Antistitum*, especially insisting upon a faithful and strict adherence to Aquinas in metaphysics.

We warn teachers to keep this religiously in mind, that *disregarding Aquinas even slightly cannot be done without great harm.* A small error in the beginning, to use the words of Aquinas in the prologue to his *De ente et essentia*, becomes very great in the end.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Letter to the Episcopal Patrons of the Catholic Institute of Paris, May 6, 1907, *Acta*, III, 58, 60.

²¹⁶ *Acta*, III, 160.

²¹⁷ Sept. 1, 1910. *AAS* 2 (1910), 656-657.

This was his particular point in the *Motu proprio Doctoris Angelici* of June 29, 1914, where he complained of the false understanding with which some have interpreted preceding decrees, as though one might follow any Scholastic doctor indiscriminately, though the doctrine is foreign to the doctrine of Thomas and even opposed to it. He scored this error and commanded that Thomas alone be followed, especially in metaphysics, which treats of the principles and major propositions of the whole Christian philosophy. These principles truly contain the quintessence of the perennial wisdom, which was discovered with much labor by the finest minds of the whole human race. Therefore, it is a terrible thing to despise these principles, and they must rather be religiously observed. If they are neglected, theologians would put forth vain effort to protect the faith or to understand any of its dogmas.

These are the famous words of the Pontiff himself:

When We recommended that the philosophy of Aquinas "particularly" but not "exclusively" be followed, some persuaded themselves that they were acting in conformity with Our will, or at least not actively opposing it, in the indiscriminate adoption of and adherence to the philosophical opinions of some other Scholastic doctor, though they be repugnant to the principles of St. Thomas. They were greatly deceived. It is very clear that when We set up Thomas as the chief guide in scholastic philosophy, We desired this to be understood above all as referring to those principles upon which that philosophy is based as its foundation. For just as the opinion of certain ancients is to be rejected which holds that what one thinks of the nature of creation makes no difference to the truth of faith so long as his opinions on the nature of God are sound, because error about created things begets a false knowledge of God; so the principles of philosophy developed by Aquinas must be preserved sacred and intact, for by those principles that knowledge of created things is uncovered which is not congruent with faith, and all the errors of all times are refuted. Thus, certain knowledge can be had of those attributes which are proper to God and to no one else, and the diversity and analogy existing between God and His works can be wonderfully illustrated . . .

Moreover, if We speak of these principles of Thomas in general and as a whole, We must declare that his doctrine contains only

those principles which the most eminent philosophers and Doctors of the Church discovered through prolonged reflection and discussion regarding the particular reasons determining human knowledge, the nature of God and creation, the moral order, and the pursuit of the goal of human life. Such brilliant patrimony of wisdom which he inherited from those before him, he perfected and augmented by the almost angelic quality of his mind. Then he applied it to prepare, illustrate and protect sacred doctrine in the minds of men. Sound reason cannot neglect such wisdom, nor can religion suffer it to be diminished in the slightest.

And this is the more true, since, if Catholic truth were once deprived of this strong bulwark, one would seek in vain for assistance for its defense from those philosophies whose principles are either common to or at least not opposed to materialism, monism, pantheism, socialism, and other modern errors. *For the main points in the philosophy of St. Thomas should not be considered as opinions about which it is legitimate to argue, but are rather foundations upon which all knowledge of natural and divine things is based. When these foundations are removed or weakened, it necessarily follows that students of sacred studies cannot perceive even the meaning of the words which are used by the Teaching Church to propose divinely revealed dogmas.*

And so We have desired that all who are engaged in the task of teaching philosophy and sacred theology be warned that they cannot depart from Aquinas in the slightest degree, especially in metaphysics, without great harm resulting therefrom.

Moreover, We declare further that those who perversely interpret or entirely despise the principles and major theses of his philosophy are not only not following Thomas but have wandered very far from the holy Doctor. *And if the doctrine of any other writer or saint was ever approved by Ourselves or Our predecessors with singular praise and the invitation or command to spread and to defend it were added to that commendation, it must be clearly understood that that doctrine is approved to the extent that it agreed with the principles of Aquinas or at least in no way contradicted them.*²¹⁸

With these points in mind, some teachers in various Institutes and Faculties,—the Order of Preachers was not represented among them,—proposed twenty-four theses to the Sacred Con-

²¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*, 337-338.

gregation of Studies for examination. They were accustomed to propose and to teach these theses, having drawn them from the doctrine of St. Thomas as the chief principles of the holy Teacher, especially in metaphysics.²¹⁹

When these were duly submitted to the Supreme Pontiff and carefully examined, the Sacred Congregation replied that they clearly contained the principles and major propositions of the holy Doctor.²²⁰ The theses were grouped into the various branches of philosophy. Seven referred to Ontology, five to Cosmology, nine to Biology and Psychology and three to Theodicy.²²¹

Meanwhile, Cardinal Merry del Val, in the name of the Pope, congratulated Fr. Peillaube, Rector of the Seminary of St. Thomas Aquinas at the Catholic Institute of Paris, on "the cult of the Angel of the Schools, whose incomparable doctrine the Sovereign Pontiff has glorified anew."²²²

To Humbert Everest, O. P. under whose auspices the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas was translated into English, he wrote:

To publish the immortal works of Aquinas is the same as divulging in writing the most complete human and divine knowledge, and offering to everyone desirous of knowledge the best method of philosophy to unlock sacred truths and effectively to destroy errors.²²³

And so it is only right that we read in the eulogy of Pius X, placed at the foot of his coffin: "he zealously promoted the teaching of Thomas Aquinas."²²⁴

²¹⁹ It is evident that these twenty-four theses were set down by Fr. G. Mattiussi, S. J., with the help of Joseph Biagioli, professor of Dogmatic Theology at the seminary of Fiesole, and by other men who were very learned in and faithful to Thomistic philosophy. When Pius X died Mattiussi wrote and published in *La Civiltà Cattolica*, at the behest of Benedict XV, a commentary on these theses. Later this commentary was separately published: *Le XXIV Tesi della filosofia di San Tommaso d'Aquino approvate dalla S. Congregazione degli Studi*, Rome, 1917. Cf. Tit. Sante Centi, O. P. in *San Tommaso d'Aquino, La Somma Teologica, Introduzione generale*, 268-272. Florence, 1949.

²²⁰ July 27, 1914, AAS (1914), 383-384.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 384-386.

²²² Letter of July 16, 1914. AAS 6 (1914), 472.

²²³ Letter of Feb. 24, 1912. AAS 4 (1912), 164-165.

²²⁴ AAS 6 (1914), 480.

After the death of Pius X difficulty arose concerning the twenty-four philosophical theses, which the Sacred Congregation of Studies had declared contained the genuine doctrine of St. Thomas. The difficulty was proposed in this form:

Do the twenty-four philosophical theses approved by the Sacred Congregation of Studies really contain the genuine doctrine of St. Thomas, and if so, should Catholic schools be obliged to subscribe to them?

The Sacred Congregation gave this response: "All the twenty-four philosophical theses express the genuine doctrine of St. Thomas, and they are proposed as safe directive norms."²²⁵

In other words: Catholic schools should not be obliged to subscribe to them, yet *these theses should be proposed in those schools as safe directive norms which should be followed*, namely, "as the doctrine preferred by the Church," as *Benedict XV*, who ratified this response, himself explained to Fr. Hugon, O. P., and as the latter related in his work *Les vingt-quatre thèses thomistes*, p. VII (Paris: Téqui, 1922).

The new Pontiff constantly desired that the prescripts of Leo XIII and Pius X on the faithful and religious adherence to the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas be followed and observed, for his is the philosophy according to Christ.

Along with Our predecessors We are equally persuaded that the only philosophy worth our efforts is that which is *according to Christ* (Colos. II, 8). Therefore, *the study of philosophy according to the principles and system of Aquinas must certainly be encouraged* so that the explanation and invincible defense of divinely revealed truth may be as full as human reason can make it. And so, We wish this Academy of St. Thomas to be under Our care not less than it was under the care of Our predecessors.²²⁶

In the statutes of the Academy renewed by order of the Pope in this *motu proprio* is found the following:

The Roman Academy of St. Thomas has this particular purpose, to explain, defend and protect the philosophy of the Angelic Doctor.

²²⁵ March 7, 1916, AAS 8 (1916), 157.

²²⁶ *Motu proprio Non multo post*, loc. cit., 6-7.

Moreover, teachers, at least once every week during the academic year, should read the works of St. Thomas on philosophy, especially the commentaries on Aristotle and Boethius.²²⁷

Thereupon the regulations which should guide the Academy were promulgated.

The purpose of this Academy is to explain, protect and spread the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor especially in philosophy, and follow strictly what was set down in the Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*. The chief works of the Academy are these: to join their studies and forces with the other academies of the same Institute so as to establish Christian philosophy everywhere according to the principles of Aquinas.²²⁸

Mention can be made also of the letter of Cardinal Bisleti, Prefect of this Congregation, to Fr. A. Baudrillart, Rector of the Catholic Institute of Paris, referring to a more intense cultivation of the doctrine of St. Thomas, in which the precepts of Leo XIII, Pius X and Benedict XV on following the theological and philosophical teaching of St. Thomas are recalled and renewed.²²⁹ The Pontiff used every occasion to extol and urge this philosophy as is evident in his letters to Frs. Hugon,²³⁰ J. Simbaldi,²³¹ and L. Theissing.²³² In the Encyclical *In praeclara* of April 30, 1921, he praised Dante who midst a great variety of studies followed especially Thomas Aquinas, Prince of the Schools; following him whose angelic qualities of mind ennobled his own, he learned practically everything he knew in the realm of philosophy and theology.²³³

Pius XI said that Benedict XV especially

was to be praised for having promulgated the Code of Canon Law in which the system, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor are unreservedly sanctioned.²³⁴

²²⁷ Decree of the Sacred Congregation of Studies, March 12, 1915. *AAS* 7 (1915), 128, 129.

²²⁸ Decree of the same Congregation approved by Benedict XV on Feb. 11, 1916. *AAS* 8 (1916), 364.

²²⁹ Sept. 30, 1916. *AAS* (1916), 412-414.

²³⁰ *AAS* 8 (1916), 174.

²³¹ *AAS* 9 (1917), 107.

²³² *AAS* 10 (1918), 480.

²³³ *AAS* 13 (1912), 210.

²³⁴ *Studiorum ducem*, loc. cit., 314.

In canon 1366, § 2 of the Code, promulgated on Pentecost 1917, is found this law:

Professors should by all means treat the studies of rational philosophy and theology, and should train students in these subjects, *according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor, and should hold these as sacred.*

Recalling the same precept in a letter to Cardinal Schulte on the founding of the Catholic Institute of Philosophy at Cologne, June 29, 1921, the Pontiff said:

Indeed, nothing could be more salutary and timely than to establish an Institute of true science, i. e., philosophy, where not only solid and safe doctrine may be taught but, in addition, all those matters touching the highest notions of the good and the true may be explained clearly so as to furnish a solution to the various questions which will continually arise. The Philosophy We mean is the scholastic philosophy, which is of principal importance with Catholics. Developed by the holy Doctors, it was brought to such a pinnacle of perfection through the genius of Aquinas that practically no one can raise it any higher. On this point the precepts of the Roman Pontiffs have been clearly formulated and the Code of Canon Law now embodies them.²³⁵

Pius XI took the same course, inviting all to follow his predecessors, and he ordered their injunctions to be observed strictly and sacredly.

What was providentially established in Canon Law on this matter should be inviolably and religiously observed. . . . When they finish the course of arts, our students should study Philosophy for at least two years in order to build a solid foundation for Sacred Theology. The Philosophy We mean is the Scholastic Philosophy developed at the cost of great labor by the holy Fathers and Doctors of the Schools, and advanced to the highest point of its perfection by the work and brilliance of Thomas Aquinas. Our illustrious predecessor, Leo XIII, did not hesitate to call it 'the bulwark of faith and solid fortress of religion' (*Aeterni Patris*). It was to the great praise of Leo that he restored Christian Philosophy, urged by his love for and cultivation of the Angelic Doctor. We will go further and say that of all the things he did during his

²³⁵ AAS 13 (1921), 423.

long Pontificate which were useful for the Church and for society, this restoration was of such importance that if he had done nothing else that alone would suffice to commend the name of so great a Pope to immortality.

Therefore, *teachers of Philosophy should consider it a duty of prime importance when teaching this subject to clerics to follow not only the system or method but the doctrine and principles of Thomas as well. They should do this even more eagerly because they know that no Doctor of the Church is so terrifying and formidable [to Modernists and other enemies of the Catholic faith] as Aquinas.*²³⁶

The Pontiff wrote in the same vein to the Moderators of Religious Orders and other societies of religious men:

Hold sacred and inviolate what We have said in Our Apostolic Letter on the matter of Seminaries and clerical studies in conformity with Canon Law, that teachers in explaining the principles of philosophy and theology should faithfully follow the scholastic method according to principles and doctrine of Aquinas.

He called to mind and adopted the famous words of Leo XIII in the Letter *Nostra ergo* of Nov. 25, 1898:

Those who wish to be true philosophers—and surely men ought especially to desire this—should place the bases and foundations of their doctrine in Thomas Aquinas.²³⁷

Indeed, no one ever “better explained the nature and method of philosophy, its parts and force.” Thomas handled these parts “in a way which was proper to each. Starting from those elements which are native to human reason and gradually ascending to others which are more remote, he arrived at the summit of all things.” His propositions on the natural power of the human mind to know truth rooted out the errors of agnosticism. His doctrine on the existence of God as demonstrable from creatures through cause and effect stand today, as in the Middle Ages, as the most solid and strongest of all.²³⁸ In this

²³⁶ Apostolic Letter on Seminaries and Clerical Studies, Aug. 1, 1922. AAS 14 (1922), 454-455.

²³⁷ Apostolic Letter *Unigenitus Dei Filius*. loc. cit., 144.

²³⁸ *Studiorum ducem*, loc. cit. 316, 317.

letter, as he recalled in an Allocution to the Cardinals on Dec. 20, 1923, he urged all the clergy "especially to follow this leader in their studies."²³⁹

There is present in the philosophy of St. Thomas,

so to speak, a certain natural Gospel, an incomparably solid foundation for all scientific construction, since the chief characteristic of Thomism is its *objectivity*: its constructions or elevations are not those of a mind cut off from reality, but are constructions of a spirit which follows the real nature of things . . . *The value of Thomistic doctrine will never seem less because this would require that the value of things become less.*²⁴⁰

In a word, the philosophy of Aquinas is the philosophy of the Church of Christ, i. e. "a Christian, Catholic, Roman philosophy."²⁴¹ Indeed, "as innumerable documents of every kind attest, the Church has adopted his philosophy for her own."²⁴²

So, he heartily praised Cardinal Mercier for his philosophical writings based on the doctrine of St. Thomas, "namely, Ontology," and, the Pontiff added:

By your explanation you protect the metaphysical principles of St. Thomas. *To recede from them, even slightly, will cause great harm,* as Our predecessor of happy memory, Pius X, warned.²⁴³

Pius XII recalled all these precepts of his predecessors and "if any precept be wanting anywhere, he restores them in their original force."²⁴⁴

The perennial philosophy or Christian philosophy which St. Thomas brought to perfection and left at its peak after composing and strengthening it with a marvellous order,²⁴⁵ rests on a solid rock. Perpetually strong and fresh, its fruit will

²³⁹ *AAS ibid.*, 607.

²⁴⁰ *Loc. cit.*, cf. note 16.

²⁴¹ Allocution to preachers and others gathered at Rome for Thomistic Week, Nov. 19-25, 1924. *Acta Hebd. Thom.*, 294, Rome, 1924.

²⁴² *Studiorum ducem*, *loc. cit.*, 314.

²⁴³ Letter of March 26, 1924. *AAS* 16 (1924), 225.

²⁴⁴ Discourse to the clerical students at Rome, *loc. cit.*; Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, *loc. cit.*

²⁴⁵ Letter to Fr. Gillet, *loc. cit.*

endure forever. Following its guidance one may safely proceed to a solid knowledge of truth.²⁴⁶

Indeed, the perennial philosophy is a work of great magnitude. To construct that work the flower of wisdom and the learned geniuses raised up by the provident power of God over the centuries have labored. Strong in its perpetual youth, it now grows stronger and continually offers increase to various studies, either when physical studies need deeper investigation, or history needs a more circumspect treatment, or critical method needs more precision.

But *the palm is reserved for St. Thomas among all the cultivators of scholastic philosophy. He holds primacy of place.* Unique lover of the truth, with what reverence, as truth demands, does he thoroughly consider the things to be known, carefully examining the facts, investigating the texts and documents from which acts and statements are discovered! How adept he is in disposing the parts of his inquiries! What firm strength in his arguments and clear dignity in his language! With conquering fortitude, which loftiness of mind engenders, he proceeds to his conclusions. By his calm and confident development he extracts their conclusions from metaphysical principles which are the common heritage of Christian wisdom for all ages.²⁴⁷

Going further in his Encyclical *Humani Generis* of August 12, 1950, he adds:

This is that healthy philosophy which stands as the heritage from previous Christian times, and it enjoys a higher order of authority, because the very Teaching Authority of the Church weighs her principles and assertions, gradually clarified and defined by men of genius, in the balance of divine revelation itself. This philosophy, recognized and accepted by the Church, protects the true and genuine validity of human knowledge, the unshakable metaphysical principles of sufficient reason, causality and finality, and ultimately the mind's ability to attain certain and immutable truth.

In this philosophy many things are explained which touch faith and morals neither directly nor indirectly, and these the Church leaves to free discussion of learned men. As for many other matters, especially the principles and chief tenets which We have

²⁴⁶ Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, *loc. cit.*

²⁴⁷ Allocution to the Third International Thomistic Congress at Rome, *loc. cit.*, 374-375.

mentioned above, the same liberty is not granted. But, even in these essential questions philosophy may be clothed in a more convenient and richer raiment, may be fortified with more precise distinction, may be divested of less useful scholastic aids, may be prudently enriched with the fruits of the progress of the human mind; but never may it be overthrown or poisoned with false principles or be regarded as a great, but obsolete, relic. Truth and its philosophic expression cannot change daily, especially in the realm of the self-evident principles of the human mind, or of those opinions which lean upon both the wisdom of the ages and the support and approbation of divine revelation. Whatever new truth the human mind can find in its sincere quest can hardly be opposed to truth already discovered, since God, the highest Truth, has created and guides the human mind, not that it may daily oppose new truths to those already established, but, having removed the errors which possibly have crept in, it may build truth upon truth in the same order and structure found in reality, the source of truth. The Christian philosopher and theologian should not, therefore, embrace eagerly and lightly whatever novelty is thought up from day to day. Rather, they should weigh it with the greatest care and a balanced judgment, so as not to lose or corrupt the truth already acquired, with consequent grave danger and harm to the faith.

If one has a true perspective in these matters, he will readily see why the Church requires that future priests be instructed in philosophy 'according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor' (*CIC*, can. 1366, 2) since, *as the experience of many centuries proves, the method and doctrine of Aquinas is singularly preeminent for teaching students and for investigating obscure truths. His doctrine is in wonderful harmony with divine revelation and is most effective for safeguarding the foundations of the faith as well as for reaping, usefully and safely, the fruits of sound progress.*²⁴⁸

Of such a kind are "those which by their nature are closely connected with the doctrine of faith" and which deal especially with the two philosophical studies, "theodicy and ethics."²⁴⁹ These do not agree with the tenets of immanentism, idealism, historical or dialectical materialism, nor with existentialism, all of which are opposed to Catholic dogma.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ *AAS* 42 (1950), 571-573.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 574-575.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 574; Allocution to the pilgrimage to Rome of the teachers and students

Students of sacred studies should receive instruction in many other fields, among which

the study of social questions is of considerable importance; but the greatest effort must be expended in philosophy and theology 'according to the method of the Angelic Doctor' (can. 1366, 2) and to these should be added a knowledge of the needs and errors which afflict our age.²⁵¹

These errors cannot be effectively refuted unless one has thoroughly learned the basic elements of philosophy and theology.

In order that the study of sacred sciences may not unhappily suffer, *We strongly exhort all of you, Venerable Brethren, to watch carefully that the precise regulations which this Apostolic See has laid down for such studies be faithfully received and translated into action.*²⁵²

In this way and in no other will the deposit of Catholic Faith be preserved whole, pure and unharmed, as well as untainted by the tenets of false philosophies.²⁵³

This extended list of documents is more than sufficient to show clearly that *the canonical doctrinal authority of Aquinas in philosophy is the greatest in a unique sense. To no other ecclesiastical writer in the field of philosophy does the Church extend such great approbation and commendation.*

of the Universities and Schools of France, Sept. 20, 1950. AAS 42 (1950), 737; Allocution to the General Congress at Rome of all the Religious Orders, Congregations, Societies and Secular Institutes, Dec. 8, 1950. AAS 43 (1951), 32, 34.

²⁵¹ *Menti Nostrae, loc. cit.*, 687-688.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 688; Discourse to the Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and other local Ordinaries . . . gathered at Rome, Nov, 2, 1950. AAS 42 (1950), 791.

²⁵³ *Humani Generis, loc. cit.*, 575; Allocution to the Third Thomistic Congress, *loc. cit.* 735.

III

GENERAL AUTHORITY OF THE ENTIRE BODY OF ST. THOMAS'
DOCTRINE

There are distinct categories of St. Thomas' doctrinal authority, namely, scientific and canonical, philosophical and theological, each outstanding and supreme in its own field as well as distinct from the others. Still, these categories may not and should not be separated, but are rather intimately joined in perfect unity. The result is that all of them taken together are as integral parts of one complete and total doctrinal authority. All these parts mutually assist and complete each other, and, arising from this natural harmony between the philosophical and theological and between the scientific and canonical authority of both, we find the *highest authority of the whole and integral body of St. Thomas' doctrine*.

This intimate harmony of reason and faith and consequently of philosophy and theology is extremely clear and distinctly mentioned in the works of St. Thomas. He says of Theology:

This science may receive help from the philosophical sciences, not that it stood in need of them, but only to make its teaching clearer. For it accepts its principles not from other sciences but immediately from God, by revelation. So, it does not depend upon other sciences as upon the higher, but it makes use of them as of the lesser, and as handmaids; even so the master sciences make use of the sciences that supply their materials, as political of military science. That it thus uses them is due not to its own defect or insufficiency but to the defect of our intelligence, which is more easily led by what is known through natural reason (from which the other sciences proceed) to that which is above reason, such as are the teachings of this science.²⁵⁴

It is not the business of Theology to demonstrate the principles of Philosophy but only to weigh their validity in relation to its own proper principles. "Whatever is found in other sciences contrary to any truth of this doctrine must be con-

²⁵⁴ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 5 ad 2.

demned as totally false.”²⁵⁵ So, what does not agree with the truth revealed by God, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived, but rather contradicts the truth, cannot be true, but is false and is to be rejected. Such falsity is totally inept and Theology cannot use it to illustrate and explain its propositions. And so the holy Doctor adds:

Inasmuch as sacred doctrine makes use of the teachings of philosophy for their own sake, *it does not accept them because of the authority of those who taught them but because of the reasonableness of the doctrine; for this reason it accepts such truths and rejects others.*²⁵⁶

This same harmony is apparent in the way in which the Church approves a doctrine, stating that the doctrine has been adopted as her own and commanding that it be followed. All proof previously adduced incontrovertibly demonstrates this. In the Code we find:

Professors shall by all means treat the *studies of rational philosophy and theology*, and shall train students in these subjects *according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor, and should hold these as sacred.*²⁵⁷

The philosophy and theology of St. Thomas are at the same time to be held sacred and explained in Catholic schools, not only as to system or method, nor only as to principles or major propositions, but even as to doctrine, i. e., the doctrinal system based on those principles and that method, in such a way that the students “may be instructed in a complete and coherent synthesis of doctrine according to the principles and method of St. Thomas Aquinas.”²⁵⁸

In this matter some declarations of the Popes are much to the point. Leo XIII said:

We propose for imitation a man whose virtue and wisdom shine brilliantly, a man fully imbued with human and divine knowledge

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, a. 6 ad 2.

²⁵⁶ *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 3 ad 8.

²⁵⁷ Can. 1366, 2.

²⁵⁸ *Deus scientiarum Dominus*, loc. cit., 253.

culled from the fruit of centuries, a man honored by the praises of the Church and the Roman Pontiffs and found equal in mind to the angels.²⁵⁹

Taking this into consideration, devotion to this great and holy man affords the most powerful help to restore *philosophic and theological* learning with consequent great utility for the State.²⁶⁰

Referring to this some years later he said:

We have taken care to restore the studies of philosophy and theology under Thomas' leadership to their time-honored method.²⁶¹ A cleric should grow up with and be exercised in his school of *philosophy and theology*: for he stands forth as the most learned and most capable in holy contests.²⁶² Let each one consider this imposed by law, that Thomas Aquinas should be followed as guide by both Faculties, and let them especially cultivate and safeguard his doctrine.²⁶³

The best preparation will be conscientious application to philosophy and theology under the guidance of St. Thomas Aquinas, and a thorough training therein, as We have pointed out and directed.²⁶⁴

With good reason was he able to write on May 9 in an Encyclical Letter confirming the Constitutions of the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, that,

From the very beginning of Our Pontificate, driven by a knowledge of serious evils, We have often striven that the studies of *Philosophy and Theology* should be reintegrated according to the time-honored scholastic system of St. Thomas, and that the discipline of his scholastic method should be established as handmaid and companion to the truth of faith. We now rightly rejoice that this has been accomplished in practically every Catholic School.²⁶⁵

After the publication of his Encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, the

²⁵⁹ Allocution to an International Congress of scholars at Rome, *loc. cit.*

²⁶⁰ Brief *Cum hoc cit*, *loc. cit.*, 114.

²⁶¹ Letter to Cardinal Parocchi, May 20, 1885, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 226.

²⁶² Encyclical to the Bavarian Hierarchy, *loc. cit.*, 128.

²⁶³ Letter to *La Civiltà Cattolica*, July 8, 1890, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 238.

²⁶⁴ *Providentissimus Deus*, *loc. cit.*, 28.

²⁶⁵ Cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 259. Cf. also Letter to the quarterly *Divus Thomas*, Feb. 7, 1893, *ibid.*, 253.

foregoing was artistically expressed on a medal struck for the occasion. On the obverse was a likeness of the Pontiff; on the reverse was a likeness of St. Thomas, wearing the doctoral insignia and extending with the right hand his Theology, and with the left his Philosophy. Across the top was this inscription, *The doctrine of Thomas Aquinas restored to its pristine place of honor*, and across the bottom, *Renewal of the covenant between divine and human wisdom*.

Pius X considered it sufficient to recall among many others this one phrase:

Studies in Philosophy, Theology and cognate sciences, especially Sacred Scripture, should be made in conformity with the pontifical directives and the study of Saint Thomas, so often recommended by Our revered predecessor and by Us.²⁶⁶

To discard Aquinas *especially in philosophy and theology*, as We have said, cannot fail to cause great harm. Using his guidance is the safest way to a profound knowledge of divine things.²⁶⁷

Benedict XV who promulgated the regulation now included in the Code of Canon Law deemed it enough to call to mind the words:

It is a sacred and salutary and almost necessary duty to follow Thomas Aquinas as the great teacher in schools where youths are instructed in *philosophy and theology*.²⁶⁸

His philosophy, since it is truly in accord with Christ, can be used safely and with no danger of error, and applied by Sacred Theology, "in order that the explanation and defense of revealed truth may be as full as human reason can make it."²⁶⁹

To this *Pius XI* added:

Teachers of Philosophy should consider it of prime importance in teaching clerics this science to follow the system and method as well as the doctrine and principles of St. Thomas. They will do that even more zealously because they know that no Doctor of

²⁶⁶ Encyclical *Pieni l'animo*, July 28, 1906, ASS (39), 324.

²⁶⁷ Motu proprio *Praeclara*, loc. cit., 335.

²⁶⁸ Letter to Fr. Ed. Hugon, O.P., loc. cit.

²⁶⁹ Motu proprio *Non multo post*, loc. cit., 6.

the Church is so terrifying and formidable to modernists and other enemies of the Catholic faith as Aquinas.

What we say in reference to *Philosophy* is likewise to be understood in the study of *Sacred Theology*. . . . For that which accomplishes the aim of making this study a true science and of giving, as Our predecessor of illustrious memory said, a complete and unshakable explanation of divinely revealed truth is scholastic philosophy under Aquinas' guidance, being put at the disposal of sacred science.²⁷⁰

He repeated these commands to religious men studying for the priesthood:

In treating the principles of philosophy, professors should follow closely the scholastic method according to the principles and doctrines of Aquinas. . . .

How important it is for your students to follow the scholastic method is apparent from the fact that because there is a very close connection between philosophy and revelation, the scholastics themselves joined both in a wonderful harmony, and set forth arguments in such a way that one offers light and important help to the other. Since both come from God, the highest and eternal truth, and one furnishes and explains the truths of reason and the other the documents of faith, they cannot oppose each other, as some have foolishly maintained. Rather, they harmonize so easily that one completes the other. It follows from this that an ignorant and unskilled philosopher will never make a learned theologian. Conversely, one who is entirely barren of divine knowledge will never be a perfect philosopher.

On this point St. Thomas aptly states: 'With the faithful a matter of faith is proved by the principles of faith, just as from self-evident principles a point can be proven to the satisfaction of all. So, theology also is a science.' (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 3.) To put it in other words, just as philosophy takes its principles of natural knowledge from reason which is a participation of the divine light, and enunciates and explains them, so theology by the light of supernatural revelation which illuminates and fills the intellect with its own light, deals with, develops and explains the notions of faith, just as if they were two rays from the same sun, or two rivers from one source, or a double building on one foundation.

²⁷⁰ Apostolic Letter *Officiorum Omnium*, loc. cit.

Human science is indeed very great as long as it yields to the teachings of faith. But, if they are ignored, then it must necessarily fall into many errors and aberrations.

But, beloved sons, if your students gather to themselves the best of *human* knowledge and apply it to the service and use of sacred doctrine, and if they burn with a love and desire for *divine truth*, they will be, and will be considered, men of God, and will bring much benefit by word and example to Christian people.²⁷¹

Finally, *Pius XII* gives generous praise to the Order of Preachers for its uncommon merit in philosophy and theology, and adds:

You have given Thomas Aquinas, *Common Doctor of these studies*, to the Church. His authority is unique, whether for educating students or in leading the search for hidden truth, and is enunciated by decree in the Code of Canon Law. Of these studies the Angelic Doctor is always a most skilled leader and never-failing light, bringing forth perpetual fruit.²⁷²

In the Encyclical *Humani Generis*, he gives stern warning that not just any philosophy can be used by a theologian as an apt instrument to explain and defend the truths of faith. Only that philosophy may be used which the Church has judged to be true and healthy for secular use, i. e., Christian philosophy under the leadership and teaching of Aquinas. He says:

It is clear that the Church cannot be bound to every system of philosophy that has existed for a short space: but those which through general agreement were composed by Catholic doctors over the course of the centuries to bring about some understanding of dogma are certainly not based upon any such frail foundation. They depend upon principles and notions deduced from the true knowledge of created things. In the deduction of this knowledge, truth divinely revealed has illuminated the human mind through the Church like a star. Therefore it is not at all astonishing that the Ecumenical Councils have not only employed these notions but even sanctioned them in such a way that it is wrong to depart from them.

Wherefore, to neglect or reject or devalue what has been accom-

²⁷¹ Apostolic Letter *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, loc. cit., 144-145.

²⁷² Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, loc. cit.

plished over many centuries by great effort by men of uncommon genius and sanctity under the watchful eye of Mother Church, and with the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order to express ever more accurately the truths conceived, expressed and perfected by the mind, and to replace it with conjectural notions and with some formless and unstable tenets of a new philosophy, which as the flowers of the field are today and are gone tomorrow, this is not only the height of imprudence but it also makes dogma but a reed shaken by the wind.²⁷³ St. Thomas with wonderful cleverness leads the intelligence of men, hesitant and doubtful by reason of the splendor of divine revelation, into the very temple of the mysteries of God. Answering difficulties by the skill of his argumentation, he emphasizes the brilliance and clarity existing in the harmony between *human* and *divine* things.²⁷⁴ So, the greatest importance must be given to *philosophical and theological* teaching according to the method of the Angelic Doctor

in the training of youths.²⁷⁵

Therefore, there can be no doubt that *the complete doctrinal authority of St. Thomas both intrinsic and extrinsic, by the approval and commendation of the Church, is truly the greatest among all ecclesiastical writers in philosophy as well as in theology.* For this "enduring, constant and repeated approval of the Holy See, time after time and even up to the present in a manner at once particularly insistent and always encouraging," of his philosophical and theological doctrine above all others, is entirely distinctive and was never attributed to anyone else.²⁷⁶

To estimate properly this unique authority one must avoid extremes arising from excess and defect and with the Church hold a proper middle course.

Some err by defect and do not obey the commands of the Church:

²⁷³ *Loc. cit.*, 566-567. Cf. *ibid.*, 571-574.

²⁷⁴ Allocution to the Third International Thomistic Congress, *loc. cit.* 735.

²⁷⁵ *Menti Nostrae*, *loc. cit.*

²⁷⁶ Cardinal L. Billot, S. J., Discourse delivered on March 11, 1915 in the great hall of the Apostolic Chancery on the occasion of erection of the Academy of St. Thomas, published in *Xenia thomistica*, I, 19, (Rome, 1925).

1. *Those who openly condemn or minimize the philosophical and theological doctrine of Thomas, and attempt to impugn it and to hold it up to derision.* As Pius XII says:

How deplorable it is that this philosophy accepted and honored by the Church is scorned by some and shamefully rejected as being outdated in form and rationalistic in its method of thought. They say that this philosophy of ours upholds the perverse notion that there is an absolutely true metaphysic. And, on the contrary, they hold that reality, especially transcendent reality, cannot better be expressed than by disparate teachings which mutually complete each other, although in a way mutually opposed. So they concede that our traditional philosophy with its clear exposition and solution of questions, its accurate definition of terms, and its clear-cut distinctions, can indeed be useful as a preparation for scholastic theology, though it is more suited to the mentality of the Middle Ages. Yet it does not offer a method of philosophy suited to the needs of modern culture.

Then, they allege that our perennial philosophy is only a philosophy of immutable essences, whereas the modern mind must look to the 'existence' of things, and to life, which is ever in flux. While scorning our philosophy they praise others, ancient and modern, oriental and occidental, by which they seem to imply that any philosophy or theory, graced with a few corrections or additions if need be, can be reconciled with Catholic dogma. No Catholic can doubt that this is entirely false, especially where there is question of those fictitious theories they call immanentism, idealism, historic or dialectical materialism, and even existentialism, whether atheistic or simply the type that denies the validity of reason in metaphysics.

Finally, they reproach the philosophy taught in our schools for regarding only the intellect in the process of cognition and neglecting the function of the will and the emotions. This is simply not true. Christian philosophy has never denied the usefulness and efficacy of good dispositions of soul for perceiving and embracing fully moral and religious truths. In fact, it has always taught the lack of such dispositions can be the reason why the intellect, influenced by the passions and evil inclinations, is so darkened that it cannot see clearly. Indeed, St. Thomas holds that the intellect can in some way perceive higher goods of the moral order, whether natural or supernatural in that it experiences in the soul a certain 'connaturality' with these goods whether this be natural

or the result of grace;²⁷⁷ and it is clear how much even this somewhat obscure knowledge can help reason in its investigations.

But it is one thing to recognize the power of the dispositions of the will in helping reason to reach a more certain and solid knowledge of moral truths; it is quite another to contend, as these innovators do, that the appetitive and affective faculties have a certain power of understanding, and that man, since he cannot decide with certainty based on reason itself what is true and therefore to be embraced, turns to his will, by which he freely chooses among opposite opinions.

It is not at all surprising that these new opinions constitute a dangerous influence for the two philosophical sciences which are by nature closely connected with the doctrine of the faith, namely theodicy and ethics. They maintain that the function of these sciences is not to prove with certitude anything about God or any other transcendental being, but rather to show that what faith teaches about a personal God and His precepts is perfectly consistent with the necessities of life and therefore are to be embraced by all to avoid despair and to attain eternal salvation. All of these opinions are openly contrary to documents of Our predecessors Leo XIII and Pius X, and cannot be reconciled with the decrees of the Vatican Council.

It would be unnecessary to deplore these aberrations from the truth, if all, even in philosophy, directed their attention with proper reverence to the Teaching Authority of the Church. It is the mission of the Church, by divine institution, not only to safeguard and interpret the deposit of divinely revealed truth but also to watch over the philosophical sciences in order to prevent Catholic dogma from being harmed because of erroneous opinions.²⁷⁸

2. *They err by defect and disobey the commands of the Church, who, under any pretext whatever, withdraw from the doctrine of Thomas, or do not study him with proper sincerity, but rather spend their time in looking for his defects, if there are any, and not in attempting to discover his genuine doctrine and to explain it.* As Leo XIII said: "to depart unadvisedly and rashly from the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor is not only against Our will, but is *fraught with danger* as well."²⁷⁹ Pius X

²⁷⁷ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 1, a. 4, ad 3; q. 45, a. 2.

²⁷⁸ *Humani Generis*, loc. cit., 573-575.

²⁷⁹ Letter to the Minister General O. F. M., loc. cit.

added, "it is true even today that when someone parts company with Thomas, he seems to be ultimately aiming at *parting company with the Church*." ²⁸⁰

Pius XI advised Professors:

To be persuaded that then only will they satisfactorily discharge their duty and Our expectation when, after long and diligent perusal of his writings, they begin to feel an intense devotion for the Doctor Aquinas and by their exposition of him succeed in inspiring their pupils with like fervor and train them to kindle a similar zeal in others. ²⁸¹

Pius XII concludes:

Wherefore, beloved sons, *fill your souls full with love and zeal for St. Thomas: strive with all your powers to perceive his clear doctrine with your minds; freely embrace whatever has a clear connection with it and is supposed by a sound reason in his doctrine.* ²⁸²

St. Augustine wisely set up this law for understanding and interpreting the works of any author—first, that the authors themselves should at least not be despised and, secondly, that they should be loved. "Who ever thought that the obscure and hidden books of Aristotle ought to be interpreted by one of his enemies?" ²⁸³ A man who wrote his works with such labor and care as St. Thomas is especially entitled to the same degree of diligence in one who is studying or explaining him. Otherwise we can suitably apply to him that saying of St. Augustine, "If you believe that I am in error, carefully consider again what was said, lest perhaps you fall into error." ²⁸⁴

3. *They also err by defect who admit the great and powerful authority of St. Thomas for other times, though not for our times which present new problems. According to them the historian of philosophy and theology should attribute a great*

²⁸⁰ Letter to Fr. Th. Pègues, *loc. cit.*

²⁸¹ *Studiorum ducem*, *loc. cit.*, 323.

²⁸² Discourse to the clerical students at Rome, *loc. cit.*

²⁸³ *De utilitate credendi*, cap. 6, no. 18, *ML* 42, 74.

²⁸⁴ *De dono perseverantiae*, cap. 24, no. 68, *ML* 45, 1034.

position to him in noting the doctrines of the Middle Ages, but the modern philosopher and theologian should recognize only his archaeological value.

On the contrary Leo XIII asserted:

This is a great accomplishment, that his doctrine is founded upon and provided with principles enjoying the widest possible extension, *is fitted to the needs* not alone of one particular age but of *all ages*, and is especially accommodated to the destruction of errors which perpetually arise.²⁸⁵

Benedict XV wrote:

The Apostolic See's famous praises of Thomas Aquinas allow no Catholic to doubt that he was divinely raised up *that the Church might have a Teacher whose doctrine should be followed for all time*; ²⁸⁶ a Teacher indeed and a Doctor who never grows old.²⁸⁷

St. Thomas, in the words of Pius XII, "is *always* a most skilful guide and a *never-failing light*"; the structure he has erected "is living perpetually, above and beyond all time, and is even now a strong and powerful bulwark to protect the deposit of Catholic faith."²⁸⁸ Therefore, it is never lawful "to overthrow [even one of his philosophical doctrines] or contaminate it with false principles, or regard it as a great, but obsolete relic."²⁸⁹

4. *They err by defect who acknowledge and praise the supreme authority of St. Thomas by words, and state that it is valid even in our time, but deny and disparage his authority by deeds, insofar as they consider it to be merely symbolic, as if Thomas was not a singular individual person but represented all scholastic writers indifferently. And so that highest doctrinal authority would affect scholastic doctrine indistinctly, and not especially the doctrine of Thomas himself, though it would*

²⁸⁵ *Cum hoc sit, loc. cit.*, 112.

²⁸⁶ Letter to Fr. Pègues, *loc. cit.*, cf. note 119.

²⁸⁷ Letter of Pius X to Fr. Hugon O.P., July 16, 1913, AAS 5 (1913), 487.

²⁸⁸ Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, *loc. cit.*

²⁸⁹ *Humani generis, loc. cit.*, 572.

be named after Thomas since he was the most outstanding of the scholastics; or even if they accept him really and as himself, they equate his authority with that of other ecclesiastical writers in such a way that Thomas' authority and that of these others is practically the same. So there is no special obligation to follow Aquinas as guide, but rather every kind of liberty is given in a sort of eclectic manner to embrace several kinds of doctrine at once, even including contrary doctrines.

Indeed, as they say, the doctrine of St. Thomas is held up by the Roman Pontiffs as safe and sound; yet this does not prevent the doctrine of other writers, though inconsistent with and contrary to Aquinas' teaching from being called safe and sound. Indeed, it may be safer and sounder! It is merely scholastic doctrine that is being approved and commanded by the Church when she extolls Aquinas, rather than Thomistic doctrine.

Such people have sadly deceived themselves. The documents of the Church clearly and positively exclude opinions of this kind. It is sufficient to refer to only a few among a great number.

Leo XIII said:

When We declare that one should receive with a willing and glad mind whatever has been wisely said, or whatever is profitable no matter by whom it is discovered or thought out, We exhort all of you, Venerable Brethren, with the greatest earnestness for the safety and glory of the Catholic faith, for the good of society, and for the increase of all knowledge, to restore the golden Wisdom of St. Thomas and to spread it as widely as possible.

We said the wisdom of St. Thomas, for it is not by any reason in Our mind to set before this age, as a standard, those things which may have been inquired into by scholastic doctors with too great subtlety or taught with too little consideration, not agreeing with the investigations of a later age; or, lastly, anything that is not probable. Let these teachers carefully chosen by you do their best to instill the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas into the minds of their hearers; and let them point out clearly its solidity and excellence above all other teaching.²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ *Aeterni Patris, loc. cit.*, 72, 74.

He wrote to the Fathers of the Society of Jesus that they should not be so engaged in the study of their own authors as to withdraw in the slightest from the cultivation of the true teaching of St. Thomas, in which they should be uniform. Such uniformity

is impossible unless the students of the Society adhere to *one* author, i. e. one already approved, concerning whom there is *one* precept [in the laws of the Society] 'they shall follow *St. Thomas* and consider him as their own proper doctor'. It follows then that if any of those authors [of the Society] whom We have praised, disagree with the doctrine of the Common Doctor [namely, St. Thomas,] there should be no doubt as to which is the right path to follow,

namely, the path of Aquinas.²⁹¹

To the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor he wrote:

The name of Thomas should be held sacred by all the children of St. Francis and they should be fearful if they fail to take as their guide him of whom Jesus Christ said that he had written well of Him.²⁹²

Pius X complained that some misunderstood him when he said that the philosophy of Aquinas should be *chiefly followed* ²⁹³ He stated that because he said *chiefly* but not *uniquely*:

Certain persons persuaded themselves that they were acting in conformity with Our will or at any rate not actively opposing it, in adopting indiscriminately and adhering to the philosophical opinions of any other Doctor of the School, *even though such principles were contrary to the principles of St. Thomas*. They are completely mistaken. For, if the doctrine of any author or saint has even been approved by Us or by Our predecessors with singular commendation joined with an invitation and order to propagate and to defend it, it may be clearly understood that it was commended only insofar as it agreed with the principles of Aquinas, or was in no way opposed to them.²⁹⁴

²⁹¹ Brief *Gravissime nos*, loc. cit., 248.

²⁹² *Loc. cit.*

²⁹³ *Motu proprio Sacrorum Antistitum*, loc. cit.

²⁹⁴ *Motu proprio Doctoris Angelici*, loc. cit., 336, 338.

Far from permitting the doctrine of St. Thomas to degenerate into some weak, amorphous scholastic relic, this injunction must be obeyed in reference to it:

In teaching the precepts of philosophy and theology, teachers should follow faithfully the scholastic method *according to the principles and doctrine of Aquinas*.²⁹⁵

St. Thomas' authority in both philosophy and theology is entirely unique:²⁹⁶ Among all the doctors of scholastic philosophy *the palm is reserved for St. Thomas, and he holds a principal position*.²⁹⁷

Moreover, the doctrine of St. Thomas is not only approved and commended by the Church as merely safe and sound, rather it is safer and sounder than the rest, indeed, it is the safest, soundest and surest.

St. Pius V said of St. Thomas that "his theological doctrine accepted by the Catholic Church is *more safe and sound than the rest*:"²⁹⁸ for he is "the *surest rule* of Christian doctrine."²⁹⁹

Benedict XIV recalled and adopted the words of Clement VIII who said that Thomas wrote his works *without any error at all*; and added that it can consequently be followed *without any danger of error*.³⁰⁰ Further, he commanded:

That henceforth none of the masters or lecturers of the College of St. Denis may explain, teach and read to their students any other doctrine, especially in theology, beside the sole doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas.³⁰¹

Leo XIII praised his pure doctrine. For:

Whatever truth was enunciated or reasonably discussed by pagan philosophers, by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, by

²⁹⁵ Pius XI, Apostolic Letters, *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, loc. cit., 144; *Officiorum omnium*, loc. cit., 454-455; Pius XII, *Humani generis*, loc. cit., 572-573.

²⁹⁶ Pius XII, Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, loc. cit.

²⁹⁷ Allocution to the Third Thomistic Congress, loc. cit., 734.

²⁹⁸ To the Master of the Sacred Palace, July 29, 1570, cf. Berthier, op. cit., 99.

²⁹⁹ Constitution *Mirabilis Deus*, April 11, 1567, *ibid.*, 98.

³⁰⁰ Brief of Aug. 2, 1756. Berthier, op. cit., 156.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*

learned men who lived before him, he not only thoroughly knew, but even increased, perfected and expanded.³⁰²

It is that

which the fulsome praises of the Roman Pontiffs and Councils commended, and which by the vote of the ages *leaves nothing to be desired of a more firm and fruitful nature*.³⁰³ Domestic and civil society, which We perceive is in danger to the degree that it is persuaded by perverse ideas, would be immediately much more peaceful and secure if in universities and schools that doctrine were taught which is *healthier and more in accord with the Teaching Authority of the Church*. Such doctrine is contained in the volumes of Thomas Aquinas.³⁰⁴

St. Thomas has the *surest* method for philosophy.³⁰⁵ His method of philosophy is "the *truest and most suitable of all*," and "We wish all to use it in both teaching and learning."³⁰⁶ For,

Human reason has an innate inclination to reach to the interior and hidden knowledge of things, and it cannot will otherwise; it follows this inclination much *more freely and easily* when Thomas is its teacher and guide, because then *it acts most safely without any possibility of exceeding the bounds of truth*.³⁰⁷

Pius X said:

His golden doctrine illuminates the mind with its brilliance and by its use reason attains the deepest knowledge of divine things *without any danger of error*.³⁰⁸

To discard Aquinas, especially in philosophy and theology, as We have said, is very harmful; *following him is the safest path to a profound knowledge of divine things*.³⁰⁹

We urge you always to consider it a sacred and a solemn duty to

³⁰² Brief *Cum hoc sit*, loc. cit. 112.

³⁰³ Letter *Gravissime nos*, loc. cit., 244.

³⁰⁴ *Aeterni Patris*, loc. cit., 70.

³⁰⁵ Letter to Cardinal Gibbons, loc. cit.

³⁰⁶ Letter to Cardinal Deschamps, loc. cit.

³⁰⁷ Encyclical *Officio sanctissimo*, loc. cit.

³⁰⁸ *Motu proprio Praeclara*, loc. cit., 334.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 335.

follow Thomas as guide in philosophy, and in the discussion of divine things. In this way, midst the excitement about studies, *you will never wander from the rule of Christian truth*; there are a great many such aberrations today, because there is an imprudent indulgence in each one's own judgment or in the unproved authority of certain men.³¹⁰ *In this matter there can be no safer course than to follow Thomas as guide.* Those who gave written treatises on divine things according to his mind have drawn from him much light and solidity.³¹¹

If, therefore, the doctrine of Thomas is safer and has been declared and praised as the safest, other doctrines inconsistent with or even contradictory to it cannot be or be called equally safe, let alone safest. Comparatives and superlatives exclude the same grade of perfection or quality in others, as we know from the very grammatical meaning of the words: "*no doctrine can be found which is safer,*" as we have just heard from the mouth of Pius X.

Indeed, from the fact alone that the doctrine of Aquinas is approved merely as being safe and sound and that approbation is not given to others inconsistent with him, it is clear that these cannot be called equally safe and sound. John of St. Thomas writes:

To be approved for soundness of doctrine is the highest type of approval; though others may not be condemned or rejected, still this one is to be preferred. It would seem to be madness if the Church with great praises of many kinds extolls and approves St. Thomas' doctrine, and admits and approves as equal those which contradict it; thus she would destroy what she was building.³¹²

From this, one should not fly to the opposite extreme. Thus, those are in error by excess who do not obey the precepts of the Church:

1. *Those who deny all authority in other writers of the Church as if Thomas' authority excluded all other doctrinal*

³¹⁰ Letter to Fr. Velásquez, *loc. cit.*, 274-275.

³¹¹ Letter to Fr. Lottini, *loc. cit.*

³¹² *Tractatus de approbatione et auctoritate doctrinae angelicae Divi Thomae*, disp. I, a. 3 no. 23, ed. Solesm. *Cursus theol.* 248 b., Paris, 1931.

authority, and as if the Angelic Doctor were the only Doctor of the Church. This would be contrary to the doctrine of St. Thomas himself and contrary to his approbation by the Church.

Contrary to St. Thomas himself, who advises the student of wisdom:

Do not heed by whom a thing is said but rather what is said you should commit to your memory.³¹³

Moreover, no one by his own thinking can find out all that pertains to wisdom and therefore, no one is so wise that he cannot learn from another: ³¹⁴ and in this way, additions are made to knowledge. In the beginning a little bit was discovered, then, later through different people it began gradually to increase into a great quantity; for it is everyone's concern to add what was lacking in the preceding additions to knowledge.³¹⁵

He himself attributes great authority to Aristotle in philosophy and St. Augustine in theology, but he does not in any way exclude others. Of Thomas Cajetan says ³¹⁶ in a reference which Leo XIII used and approved, "because his veneration for the ancient and sacred Doctors was so great, he may be said to have gained a perfect understanding of them all."³¹⁷

Contrary to his approbation by the Church, which expressly recognizes the authority of others. When we praise St. Thomas, Leo XIII said:

We do not disapprove, indeed, of those learned and able men who bring their learning and industry and the riches of new discoveries to the aid of philosophy: for We clearly see that such a course tends to the increase of learning.³¹⁸ Indeed, We declare that everything wisely said should be received with willing and glad mind, as well as everything by whomsoever profitably discovered and thought out.³¹⁹

Passing over the Fathers of the Church and the Doctors whose numbers daily increase and receive the approbation of

³¹³ *Opusculum de modo studendi.*

³¹⁴ *In Ps. 43, no. I, Opera Omnia XVIII, 495, ed. Vives.*

³¹⁵ *In I Ethicorum ad Nicomachum, lect. II, n. 139.*

³¹⁶ *Comment. in Summam Theol., II-II, q. 148, a. 4.*

³¹⁷ *Aeterni Patris, loc. cit., 62.*

³¹⁸ *Ibid., 68.*

³¹⁹ *Ibid., 72.*

authority in accord with their merits, we will mention only these words of Leo XIII:

It is a joyous thing to recall the fortunate period when there came out from the halls of the Theological Faculty of Paris, and in return poured forth on it the treasures of wisdom, such men as Peter Lombard, William of Paris, Albert the Great, Bonaventure, Giles and many others who illumined the whole world by the light of their learned wisdom. Because of their number it is necessary to pass over some of them, yet We must mention Thomas Aquinas whom the whole Church admires and respects as the most brilliant sun. *New Doctors should follow such distinguished leaders, and if they read their works, and especially if they embrace the doctrine of the Angelic Master and diligently teach and strenuously safeguard it*, we may hope that that pristine dignity and unique excellence will be recaptured by a great increase in studies and in Christianity itself.³²⁰

The brightness of the sun, the moon and the stars are all different, for star differs from star in brightness.³²¹ All shine but with different degrees of light. The more intense brightness of the sun does not blot out the lesser brightness of the other stars, but perfects them and renders them brighter. So the brilliance of the Aquinian Sun does not exclude the refulgence of other Doctors, but from the fact that he has perfected, explained and expanded their doctrine, he renders them brighter and more lustrous.

2. *They err by excess who consider that each and every element of the Thomistic doctrinal synthesis is of equal scientific or canonical authority, even though they be secondary and of less importance, or with no intrinsic relation to faith or morals.* As Pius X wrote:

It is clear that when We present Thomas as the chief guide for our scholastic philosophy, *We want this to be understood especially of his principles* upon which his philosophy is based as its foundation.³²² For those which are the capital theses in the philosophy of

³²⁰ Letter on the founding of a Theological Faculty at the Catholic Institute of Paris, Dec. 10, 1889, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 236-237.

³²¹ *I Cor.* XV, 41.

³²² *Doctoris Angelici*, *loc. cit.* 337.

St. Thomas are not to be considered as debatable one way or another, but as the foundation upon which all knowledge of natural and divine things is based. If such principles are removed or in any way impaired, it necessarily follows that students of sacred sciences will fail to perceive even the meaning of the words in which divinely revealed dogmas are proposed by the Teaching Authority of the Church. We, therefore, desired that all teachers of philosophy and theology should be warned that if they deviated so much as a step, especially in metaphysics, from Aquinas, they exposed themselves to the greatest risk.³²³

Among such principles or major propositions in philosophy must be numbered the *twenty-four thomistic theses* which the Sacred Congregation of Studies declared "clearly contain the principles and major propositions of the holy Doctor."³²⁴

Hence we have the words of Pius XII to students studying at Rome for the priesthood: "adopt freely whatever pertains clearly to it [the doctrine of St. Thomas] and finds a *solid basis* in it."³²⁵

Again in the Encyclical *Humani Generis*: "In this philosophy many things are explained which neither directly nor indirectly touch faith or morals and which consequently the Church leaves to the free discussion of experts. But this does not hold for many other things, especially those principles and fundamental tenets to which We have just referred [the unshakable metaphysical principles of sufficient reason, causality, and finality]."³²⁶

At the same time we must keep in mind what he said to the teachers and students of the Universities and Schools of France who were visiting in Rome: "all the sciences have directly or indirectly some rapport with religion, not only theology, philosophy, history, literature, but even those other sciences in the juridical, medical, physical, natural, cosmological, paleontological and philological fields. The presumption that they include no positive relation to dogmatic and moral questions leaves

³²³ *Ibid.*, 338.

³²⁴ July 27, 1914, *loc. cit.*; March 7, 1916, *loc. cit.*

³²⁵ Discourse of May 24, 1939, *loc. cit.*

³²⁶ *Loc. cit.*, 572.

them open to the risk of finding themselves often in contradiction with such questions. It is necessary, then, that, even if the teaching of these sciences does not directly touch religious truth and conscience, the teacher himself should be well versed in religion, i. e., the Catholic religion."³²⁷

And so, though every element in the Thomistic doctrinal synthesis is fully organized, connected and ordered, not every element has the same weight of firmness and authority. The fundamental principles upon which all the others depend and from which the rest flow, enjoy the greatest authority.

3. *They are equally in error by excess who exclude all freedom of thought, judgment, investigation and verbal expression of this doctrine as to its principles and major propositions, as if each and every one of these principles were imposed upon the mind for belief and assent.*

When the Sacred Congregation of Studies was asked if the twenty-four philosophical thomistic theses should be imposed upon and held by Catholic schools, it answered that they all contain and express the genuine doctrine of St. Thomas, but it did not say that they must be imposed upon Catholic schools and held by them. The Congregation said simply: "they should be proposed as safe directive norms,"³²⁸ "with no obligation being imposed of embracing all the theses," as Benedict XV declared in a letter to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus on March 19, 1917. At the same time, he praised Fr. Hugon, O. P. for having made a commentary on the theses and placing their force and objective truth in a clear light; and to him the Pontiff reiterated, as he himself says, that "if he did not mean to impose them for interior assent, he demanded that they be proposed as the preferred doctrine of the Church."³²⁹ And so they always remain greatly approved, praised and preferred to those which are inconsistent or opposed. These latter are merely permitted and tolerated, but the others are positively

³²⁷ Allocution of Sept. 21, 1950. AAS 42 (1950), 735.

³²⁸ Response of March 7, 1916, *loc. cit.*

³²⁹ *Les Vingt-quatre thèses thomistes*, p. VII. (Paris, 1922).

approved, praised and preferred, and *there is an obligation imposed to teach them in the schools as safe directive norms*. So, just as one would fail by excess if he should say that all are a matter of obligation in Catholic schools, so one would fail by defect should he say that all doctrines which are opposed or inconsistent are equally approved or considered to be of equal authority; as if the Church had manifested no preference for the theses of St. Thomas.

With respect to self-evident principles and immediate deductions from them to be approved for secular use and confirmed by the truths of faith, Pius XII says:

However, even in these fundamental questions we may clothe our philosophy in a more convenient and richer dress, make it more vigorous with a more effective terminology, divest it of certain scholastic aids found less useful, prudently enrich it with the fruits of the progress of the human mind. But we may never overthrow it, or contaminate it with false principles, or regard it as a great, but obsolete, relic. Truth and its philosophic expression cannot suffer daily change, least of all when there is a question of self-evident principles of the human mind, or of those propositions supported by the wisdom of the ages and by divine revelation.³³⁰

Catholic theologians and philosophers

should so speak by word of mouth or in writing to the men of their age that they may be intelligently and easily understood. It is inferred from this that in proposing and setting forth questions, in leading discussions, in choosing any form of speech, they should wisely accommodate their expression to the talent and inclination of their own age. *For what is unchangeable, let no one disturb or attempt to change.*³³¹

But if it should not happen to be a difficult matter, as experience and practice point out, its wisdom should be translated into the common idiom for laymen and through fuller explanation present technical ideas which are ordinarily obscure for those unskilled in theology.³³²

4. Finally, they err by excess who consider the doctrinal

³³⁰ *Humani generis*, loc. cit. 572.

³³¹ Allocution to the Jesuit General Congregation, loc. cit., 384-385.

³³² Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, loc. cit., 388.

system of St. Thomas to be a closed book already enriched with every perfection so that neither the ideas nor words used to express them can be further developed. This, of course, is not human, because the human level is not capable of absolute perfection in its works. And it is not in accord with Thomas' own usual mode of action. He was continually developing, eliminating where necessary, and completing his doctrines and expressions, as can be seen in the autographs which are still preserved today, e. g. *Summa contra Gentiles*, *Commentarium in librum Boethii de Trinitate*, *Opusculum De rationibus fidei*. Furthermore, this notion is contrary to the mind of the Church which approves and praises his doctrine.

Pius X, following Leo XIII who heaped praises upon the doctrine of Thomas and commanded that it be followed and spread, recalled that Leo did not fail to recognize the advances in knowledge being made in our day and to urge the clergy to keep *au courant* so that they might discharge their office worthily. Pius himself roundly praised those who work:

to illustrate the opinions of Aquinas with learned commentaries, or develop his thought by the investigation of new points developed from his principles or weigh his findings in the light of more modern philosophy.

And he congratulated them,

because they help the genuine progress of philosophy to a great degree.³³³

The Sacred Congregation of Studies in its decree on the use of the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas as the text in Universities, Colleges, Seminaries and Institutes enjoying the power to grant degrees in Theology, is to be interpreted in this way: that,

together with some text indicating the logical order of questions and containing the positive part, the *Summa Theologica* should be used and explained for the scholastic part.³³⁴

³³³ Motu proprio *In praecipuis laudibus*, to the Roman Academy of St. Thomas, Jan. 23, 1904, cf. Berthier, *op. cit.*, 272.

³³⁴ March 7, 1916, AAS *loc. cit.*

It believed that even that great work of Aquinas needs the service and help of some other work pointing out the order of questions and containing positive theology.

Pius XII, after praising St. Thomas' doctrine, recalls the precept of the Code of Canon Law (can. 1366, 2) and himself adds:

We are not speaking now of those opinions and doctrinal formulas relating to physical or natural things, which in past times were proper and peculiar to their supporters, in that the discoveries of human knowledge in our age have surpassed and gone beyond these opinions. The Church favors these discoveries, is not at all opposed to them, and rather promotes than fears them.³³⁵

Rejecting these extremes and opposing interpretations, the *true and just interpretation of the validity of the doctrinal authority of St. Thomas and the obligation to accept it stands in the middle between these two extreme opinions*. The method, principles and philosophico-theological doctrinal synthesis of St. Thomas is to be held sacred by all and inviolably preserved,³³⁷

With assiduous effort search the books containing the institution, laws and history of religion. Weigh what is discovered with wise investigation and turn it to the use of sacred science,³³⁶

in such a way that it may be enriched by rightly and subsequently acquired truths, illustrated from research and historical investigations, and expanded by its application to new problems arising today. It does not deny freedom to investigate its genuine doctrine when its interpreters disagree, and indeed offers its support in leading the search for true knowledge, but not that which is false and specious.

The doctrine of Aquinas is so solid and firm in itself that it does not fear or avoid discussion and comparison with others. Rather, it invites such discussion and directs it along a safe

³³⁵ Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, *loc. cit.*, 387.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 388.

³³⁷ CIC, can. 1366, 2; *Deus scientiarum Dominus*, art. 29; Pius XII, Discourse to Seminarians at Rome, *loc. cit.*; Allocution to the Dominican General Chapter, *loc. cit.*; *Humani Generis*, *loc. cit.*

path in the acquisition of truth. Thomas is not proposed for imitation in such a way that his followers and disciples may sleep and take their rest or be sluggish, but, imitating his work and industry, they should intensely apply all their energy in learning and expanding the truth. As Thomas himself says: "A man should employ every force within him as intensely as possible to strive towards divine things, that his intellect may be free for contemplation and his reason for the investigation of reality."³³⁸ And again: "the human mind should always be moved more and more intensely to know God according to its measure," i. e. as far as it possibly can.³³⁹

Leo XIII said:

Indeed, it seems that today too many mark genius by its aversion for antiquity. But the best method of philosophy is that which by thought finds new truths, and does not at the same time neglect the wisdom of the ancients:³⁴⁰ and We declare that everything wisely said should be received with willing and glad mind, as well as everything by whomsoever profitably discovered and thought out.³⁴¹

Pius XI said:

We desire that among lovers of St. Thomas, as all sons of the Church who are engaged in higher studies ought to be, there be honorable rivalry in a just and proper freedom which is the life blood of studies, but let no spirit of malevolent disparagement prevail among them, for any such, so far from helping truth, serves only to loosen the bonds of charity. Let everyone hold inviolable the prescription of the Code of Canon Law, that 'teachers shall treat the studies of philosophy and theology and train students therein according to the method, doctrine and principles of the Angelic Doctor, and religiously adhere thereto,' and all should obey this regulation in such a manner that they can truly call St. Thomas their teacher. And so that no one will require of others more than the Church, Mother and Teacher of all, demands, even in those matters which are disputed by more reputable authors in Catholic

³³⁸ *In Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 2, a. 1 c.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, ad 7.

³⁴⁰ Letter to L. Vives, *loc. cit.*

³⁴¹ *Aeterni Patris*, *loc. cit.*, 72.

schools, let none be prevented from following an opinion which seems to him to be closer to the truth.³⁴²

These famous words of the Pontiff which some frequently use and perhaps sometimes abuse, and which should be correctly understood and interpreted, come from previous utterances of his and are even found in the declarations of Pius XII. For the right and power resides within the jurisdiction of the Roman Pontiffs not only to interpret authentically their own laws, but even those established by their predecessors.

It is evident that Pius XI did not equate the doctrinal authority of other ecclesiastical writers with that of St. Thomas even in proved and established fields, let alone in controversial and disputed matters. In both fields the authority of Aquinas is always preeminent, though on controversial and disputed points it is not imposed with any internal force arising from the weight of its arguments, and assent consequently and quite reasonably is not required by the Church.

We have recounted above³⁴³ many of his words written and proclaimed after that Encyclical which established anew the obligation to follow Thomas in philosophy and theology. The result is that the doctrine of Aquinas should not be regulated by the opinions of others, but rather, other doctrines should follow his method, principles and doctrine.³⁴⁵ He highly praised and congratulated Cardinal Mercier for his philosophical works which show

how strong the perennial philosophy is, not only to unite with ancient wisdom what has been recently discovered by the praiseworthy work and brilliance of famous men, but to refute all errors so sharply opposed at present to right reason and the doctrine of the Church.

The Pope makes special mention of his Ontology:

³⁴² *Studiorum ducem*, loc. cit., 323, 324.

³⁴³ Pp. 36-43; 68-71.

³⁴⁴ Apostolic Letter, *Officiorum omnium*, loc. cit., confirmed in the Apostolic Letter *Unigenitus Dei Filius*, loc. cit.; Allocution to the professors and students of the "Angelicum," loc. cit., 599-600.

Since you there support by illustration the principles of St. Thomas' metaphysics. *To withdraw from them, even slightly, will cause great harm, as Our predecessor of happy memory, Pius X, warned.*³⁴⁵

Thus he approved and adopted the words of Pius X. Since by the witness of the Church itself the twenty-four thomistic theses truly contain the principles and major propositions of St. Thomas in metaphysics, it clearly follows that to withdraw in the slightest from them will be a cause of great harm.

Pius XII has given the authentic interpretation of these words. He recognized a certain freedom *within the doctrine of St. Thomas and his school*, when he said that noted interpreters of Aquinas may dissent and dispute among themselves, but not against his certain and genuine doctrine.

These are his famous words:

Beloved sons, fill your hearts full of love and zeal for St. Thomas: strive with all your powers to understand his brilliant doctrine; freely embrace whatever clearly relates to his doctrine and finds safe support in it.

These precepts, already imposed by Our predecessor, We Our-selves bring forth and recall at present, and if any are not being followed they are to be restored in full vigor; at the same time We adopt the exhortations of Our predecessors by which they desired to protect progress in true science and real liberty in studies. We entirely approve and commend *the measuring, where necessary, of new discoveries in studies, with ancient wisdom. It is perfectly legitimate to investigate freely those matters upon which well-known interpreters of the Angelic Doctor usually dispute; new findings from history should be applied for fuller understanding of the texts of Aquinas.* No individual 'should act as if he were a master in the Church;' ³⁴⁶ nor 'should anyone require more from others than the Church, Mother and Teacher of all, demands;' ³⁴⁷ nor should foolish dissent be encouraged.

If all these points, as We trust, are followed, a fullsome increase may be expected from studies. *For, encouragement to spread truth, far from being suppressed by the doctrine of St. Thomas, is rather stimulated and safely directed.*³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ Letter of March 26, 1924, *loc. cit.*

³⁴⁶ Benedict XV, Encyclical *Ad Beatissimam*, Nov. 1, 1914, AAS 6 (1914), 576.

³⁴⁷ *Studiorum ducem*, *loc. cit.*

³⁴⁸ Discourse to the Seminarians at Rome, *loc. cit.*, 246-247.

We should not pass over those words making Thomas, in a way, like the Church. Recalling his Encyclical *Humani generis* to the scholars meeting at Rome for the Third International Thomistic Congress he said:

This encyclical letter *represents a safe path* to you who are discussing and interpreting, *with the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas leading you like the brightest Sun.*³⁴⁹

Indeed, encouragement in seeking and spreading truth is not suppressed but rather stimulated and safely directed by the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas, as by the encyclicals of the Roman Pontiff.

He adds, further, that though it is true

that the Pontiffs generally allow freedom to theologians on matters which are disputed in various ways by men of great reputation, still history teaches that many matters that were formerly open to free discussion no longer now admit of discussion.³⁵⁰

So, today, after so many approbations, commendations and precepts by the Church, no Catholic is free to deny the matchless doctrinal authority of St. Thomas, whose teaching in philosophy and theology, amidst all that surround it, not only outside but also within the Church, she prefers and praises over others: "justly favored by the Church."³⁵¹

God has raised up the Angelic Doctor in the Church to communicate his salutary and solid doctrine and to light it up like the Sun. His wisdom, especially commended to all, is admired by the whole world.³⁵²

Truly, "among the Scholastic Doctors, *Thomas Aquinas stands eminently as the prince and master of them all,*"³⁵³

³⁴⁹ *Loc. cit.*

³⁵⁰ *Humani generis, loc. cit., 568.*

³⁵¹ Letter of adherence to the Roman Pontiff by the Lateran Athenaeum in Rome on the occasion of his Encyclical *Humani generis*, Nov. 9, 1950, in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 90 (1950), no. 271, Nov. 19, 1950, p. 1, col. 5.

³⁵² Pius XII in the Preface of the Mass of St. Thomas Aquinas according to the rite of the Order of Preachers, composed by the Pope himself.

³⁵³ *Aeterni Patris, loc. cit., 62.*

whose doctrine is not only safer and more solid than the rest, but even more in accord with the teaching of the Church,³⁵⁴ and therefore teachers should clearly point out his soundness and excellence in Catholic schools.³⁵⁵ In the judgment of the Church, "it is praiseworthy to follow Thomas";³⁵⁶ "to depart foolishly and rashly from him is fraught with great peril":³⁵⁷ to depart from Aquinas even slightly especially in metaphysics and theology, will cause great harm;³⁵⁸ not to depart from his discipline even in the slightest is the highest praise,³⁵⁹ and a security preventing any danger of wandering from the rule of Christian truth.³⁶⁰ In a word, the slightest digression from Aquinas is neither permitted nor tolerated; but the Church urges and strongly praises fidelity in following him, even in minor matters.

So, the Order of Preachers, which retains the doctrine of Thomas as its most precious treasure and regards it as sacred and inviolable,³⁶¹ puts this great fidelity together with the encouragement and freedom to seek and explain truth, in the form of law:

Following the example of so great a doctor and leaning upon him as upon a solid rock, our professors and writers should take care to follow with docility and reverence in the footsteps of the doctrinal tradition of the Church and our Order. This does not at all conflict with the legitimate academic freedom of investigating, judging, and resolving current or ancient questions with impartial consideration. From any suitable and approved source means may

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

³⁵⁶ Leo XIII, Letter to Bishop Haine, *loc. cit.*

³⁵⁷ *Idem*, Letter to the Minister General O.F.M., *loc. cit.*

³⁵⁸ Pius X, *Praeclara*, *loc. cit.*, 335; *Doctoris Angelici*, *loc. cit.*, 338; Pius XI, Letter to Cardinal Mercier, *loc. cit.*, 227.

³⁵⁹ Benedict XV, Letter to Fr. L. Theissling, *loc. cit.*, 397, "And to this Order [of Preachers] must be awarded the tribute that it not only nourished the Angelic Doctor, but also that never afterwards did it deviate from his doctrine in the slightest"; Pius XI, *Studiorum ducem*, *loc. cit.*, 324.

³⁶⁰ Pius X, Letter to Fr. Valásquez, *loc. cit.*; *Praeclara*, *loc. cit.*, 334.

³⁶¹ Acts of the General Chapter, Rome, Sept. 21-30, 1946, no. 68 (Rome, 1946) p. 57.

be adopted more safely to find the truth which is from God, to assimilate it more fully, to develop it more fruitfully, keeping in mind the exhortation of our most Holy Father, Pius XII, to the Fathers at the preceding chapter: 'whatever truth our times bring forth, weigh it with impartial investigation, and turn it to the use of sacred science.' 'Encouragement to seek and spread truth is not at all suppressed by the doctrine of St. Thomas, but is rather stimulated and safely directed.'³⁶²

This freedom, especially in matters recently under discussion and consideration, should be carefully and prudently used, lest the false be accepted for the true and the shadow for the substance. As Pius XII says, professors teaching philosophy and theology in Catholic schools,

in regard to new questions which modern culture and progress have brought to the forefront, should submit them to careful research, but with the necessary prudence and caution . . . They should not think, indulging in a false eirenism, that the dissident and erring can happily be brought back to the bosom of the Church, if the whole truth found in the Church is not sincerely taught to all without any corruption or diminution.³⁶³

The Pontiff is grieved to note that some indulge in these novelties without sufficient examination and approbation. They seem to be influenced by this reason, "lest we be unaware of the knowledge which recent progressive research has brought forth,"³⁶⁴ which is the way it appears to intellectuals of the modern stamp. And what is more serious, this affects priests with a zeal and an itch for novelty and many of these priests seem to be

less equipped than others with learning and doctrine and austerity of life.

Novelty itself is never a criterion of truth, and it can be praise-

³⁶² Acts of the General Chapter, Washington, Sept. 18-24, 1949, no. 59 (Rome, 1950), p. 53-54.

³⁶³ *Humani generis*, loc. cit., 578; 564-565: Instruction of the Congregation of the Holy Office to local Ordinaries *de motione oecumenica*, Dec. 20, 1949, AAS 42 (1950) 142-147.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 564.

worthy only when at the same time it confirms the truth and leads to virtue and probity of life. What has made its appearance in our time has wandered very far from the true path: philosophical systems which are born and die without improving morals in any way.³⁶⁵

In the same way,

much is said, but hardly weighed on the scale of reason, about the 'new theology' which is always changing along with all other things; it is always about to reach but never quite arrives at its goal. If such opinions should be embraced, what will become of changeless Catholic dogmas and the unity and stability of the faith?

While you continue, therefore, to reverence and regard as sacred and serious the never-failing Truth, have regard for the studious investigation and solution of problems which arise with the times, especially if they beget obstacles and difficulties for the learned faithful. By your explanation of these problems, thereby changing a difficulty into a help, strengthen their faith.

When new and debatable questions arise, let the principles of Catholic doctrine stand out in your minds; when some novelty arises in theology, let it be weighed with vigilant caution. Distinguish solid and certain doctrine from that which is merely conjecture, and from that which a fallible and not always laudable practice can introduce and use even in theology and philosophy. Offer a friendly hand to those in error but lend no ear to erroneous opinions.³⁶⁶

Among the doctrines proposed as novel mention must be made of the denial or at least the doubt of the possibility that human reason without the help of revelation and grace can prove the existence of a personal God by arguments drawn from the created universe; the denial that the world had a beginning; the affirmation that creation of the world is necessary in that it proceeds from the necessary liberality of divine love; the denial of God's eternal and infallible foreknowledge of the free actions of man; the denial of the transmission of original sin from the one Adam to all other men descending from him

³⁶⁵ *Menti Nostrae, loc. cit.*, 694.

³⁶⁶ Allocution to the Jesuit General Congregation, *loc. cit.*, 385.

through natural generation, the Virgin Mary alone being excepted by a special privilege of God, the denial being the asserted theory of polygenism; the perversion of the Catholic doctrine of sin as an offense against God, and of the satisfaction offered for us by Christ; the corruption of the doctrine of the free elevation of human nature to the supernatural order, as if God could not create beings with an intellect and yet not order and call them to the beatific vision; the denial of transubstantiation and of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, as though they should be reduced to pure and simple symbolism; the grave and positive doubt whether angels are personal beings and whether matter and spirit differ essentially; the acceptance without any discretion of the philosophical doctrine of existentialism and evolutionism; and many exegetical aberrations as well. All these points Pius XII condemned in this Encyclical *Humani Generis*, and other recent documents, and decreed that they are forbidden in Catholic Schools.³⁶⁷

There are some who interpret this moderate and rightful manner of following St. Thomas in this fashion: what the Angelic Doctor did for his age and what he would do for our age if he were living, is what his modern Thomist disciples should do.

This statement, if correctly understood, is true. If taken in the sense, as many do, that Thomas adopted the philosophy of his time, i. e. the peripatetic, for the service of Theology, and accordingly, if he lived now, he would adopt the philosophies which surround us, such as idealism, immanentism, existentialism and the rest, then the statement must be pronounced entirely false. He did not take Aristotelian philosophy as it was, nor as interpreted by Greek, Jewish and Arab commentators, but as purified and developed and expanded and greatly enriched by Christian philosophers, especially by his

³⁶⁷ *Humani generis*, loc. cit., 568-571, 573-574, 576-578; *Menti Nostrae*, loc. cit., 688; Discourse to the Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and other local ordinaries at Rome for the solemn definition of the Assumption, Nov. 2, 1950, *AAS* 42 (1950), 791; Allocution to the delegates at the General Congress of all Religious Orders, Congregations, Societies and Secular Institutes, Dec. 8, 1950. *AAS* 43 (1951) 32, 34.

teacher, St. Albert the Great, and most especially by himself. He worked very industriously and suffered many calumnies. In his time and at the same University of Paris there were some, the so-called Averroists, who without discretion or prudent caution accepted some philosophical doctrines from Aristotle or from his expositors, which contradicted divinely revealed truth. These denied the personal immortality of the human soul or at least laid the foundation for the doctrine of the active intellect entirely incompatible with the personal immortality of the soul.

The holy Doctor directly alludes to them in a sermon probably delivered in July 1270 before the University of Paris in which he said:

There are some who study philosophy and say things which are not true according to the faith. And when they are informed that what they said contradicts the faith, they state that Aristotle said it, but they, far from asserting the same, merely repeat the words of Aristotle. Such a one is a false prophet or a false teacher because it amounts to the same thing to raise a doubt and not to solve it, as to concede it. This is pointed out in *Exodus* (21:33-34) when it says that if a man open a pit and dig a cistern and cover it not, and the neighbor's ox comes and falls into the cistern, the one who opened the cistern is bound to restitution. He opens a cistern who raises a doubt pertaining to the faith. He does not cover the cistern who does not solve the doubt, though he happens to have a clear and capable mind and is not liable to error. But someone else who does not have such a clear mind is easily deceived, and the one who raised the doubt is held to restitution, because through his fault someone fell into the ditch.

See how many philosophers there were and how much they had to say about things pertaining to the faith, yet you can hardly find two to agree on one opinion, and even those who do say something true do not say it without some mixture of error. A little old man may know more about his faith than all the philosophers before him.

We read that Pythagoras was at first a boxer. He heard a teacher arguing on the immortality of the soul and declaring that the soul was immortal. He was so affected that he put everything aside and took up the study of Philosophy. What ordinary person is

there today who does not know that the soul is immortal? *Faith has a much wider extension than philosophy. So, if philosophy contradicts the faith, it must not be accepted.*³⁶⁸

Leo XIII, admiring the great work and labor of St. Thomas, wrote:

This is numbered among the great benefits which the Church owes to the great Aquinas, that he so beautifully harmonized Christian theology with the peripatetic philosophy then popular, that we have Aristotle fighting for Christ and no longer an adversary.³⁶⁹

By this purification and elevation joined with multiple additions from the neo-Platonists and St. Augustine and the Arabs, and especially from his own work and effort, by which he joined all those fragments of truth into one body and raised it to a higher and more perfect synthesis, peripatetic philosophy was entirely altered, but its system and method of philosophy was preserved. Indeed, as Martin Grabmann says: "the work of the ages more enduring than bronze which Aquinas accomplished was his synthesis of Augustine and Aristotle."³⁷⁰ Yet, he far surpassed both of them and established with one impulse a superior doctrinal synthesis fully philosophical and fully Christian: "a Christian philosophy in the full sense of the word, without ceasing to be a philosophy in the full sense of the word," to use the words of Etienne Gilson.³⁷¹

Rather, therefore, than taking this or that philosophy, as peripatetic or academic, Stoic or Arabian, he took for the use of theology and the service of the faith, the truths of the natural order sought after by the continuous labor and effort of human reason. These truths constitute the *perennial philosophy* or *common sense* philosophy as Benedict XV calls it,³⁷²

³⁶⁸ S. Thomae Aquinatis et S. Bonaventurae Balneoregiensis sermones anecdoti, ed. P. Uccelli, p. 71. (Modena, 1879).

³⁶⁹ Brief Gravissime nos., loc. cit., 247.

³⁷⁰ "De quaestione 'Utrum aliquid possit esse simul creditum et scitum' inter scholas augustinismi et aristotelico-thomismi medii aevi agitata," in *Acta hebdomadae augustinianae-thomisticae*, 139. Rome, 1931.

³⁷¹ "L'idée de Philosophie chez Saint Augustin et chez Saint Thomas," in the same *Acta*, 84.

³⁷² Letter to Cardinal Schulte, loc. cit., 423.

i. e., *the philosophy without qualification*.³⁷³ He would not use but would entirely reject the many false philosophies which surround us today, as immanentism, existentialism, materialistic or agnostic philosophy, in that they are incompatible with the truths of faith and contrary to right reason. Fr. Schultes says:

There can be a possible expurgation in Aristotelian philosophy of the errors which are accidental. Aristotle can be corrected from his own fundamental principles. But the errors present in modern philosophy are so fundamental that they cannot be corrected. This philosophy must be entirely rejected and expunged.³⁷⁴

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange adds:

They say moreover that the modern philosophical systems ought to be baptized as St. Thomas baptized Aristotelianism. For that, two things would be necessary. It would be necessary first to possess the genius of St. Thomas, and then the modern philosophical systems would have to be baptizable. To be baptizable a soul is necessary. A system which reposes entirely on a false principle cannot be baptized.³⁷⁵

But if one understands how he acted towards the philosophers of his time and how he would act towards modern philosophers if he were now living, then the statement is true. He proceeded very cautiously and prudently with the philosophers of his own and previous times, treating them with great understanding, yet most precisely distinguishing the true from the false in their writings so as to take the truth and reject error.

In this matter he was no respecter of persons but of reality, for he was a unique lover and cultivator of truth. Fame, fortune or opportunism failed to touch or affect him, but with a calm and serene spirit he thoroughly weighed all things and judged them from the height of eternal principles. He always fortified

³⁷³ Cf. above pp. 3-9.

³⁷⁴ *De Ecclesia Catholica*, 726. (Paris, 1925)

³⁷⁵ "La structure de l'Encyclique *Humani generis*," in *Angelicum*, 28 (1951), 9-10. Cf. also A. Perego, S. J., "La Nuova Teologia. Sguardo d'insieme alla luce dell' Enciclica *Humani generis*," in *Divus Thomas* Pl., 53 (1950), 442-443.

himself with the reading of spiritual books, so as not to lose devotion from delving into the philosophers.³⁷⁶

Without any doubt, Aristotle and the Jewish, Arabian and Latin philosophers of his time were much less dangerous than modern philosophers in that all of them admitted the first and fundamental principles of a healthy and perennial philosophy, which many of the moderns reject.

He would proceed much more cautiously and prudently with modern philosophers if he lived now. How thoroughly he would investigate and prudently weigh the novelties of our time; how unhesitatingly he would accept those which were tried and approved; how eagerly he would accept the chance from others to investigate more deeply and proceed more cautiously; he would always take encouragement from all to ascend to higher and better things. There is no doubt that he would follow the admonitions and cautions which Pius XII declared must be maintained with reference to proposing new doctrines openly or counterfeitley, and he would keep them to the letter.

The true cultivation of St. Thomas, according to reality and the recommendation of the Church, consists in holding sacred and inviolate his method, principles and doctrine in philosophy and theology, and imitating at the same time his scientific, intellectual and moral qualities, as well as cultivating them, and manfully expressing them in the life of his disciples, so that Thomas continues to live in them completely, especially according to the spirit.

His discipline is not hard or tyrannical but sweet and human, yet prudent and firm. With how much modesty, consideration and simplicity he proposes his doctrines that his readers may mull them over and convince themselves. There is so much order in his exposition together with brevity, and so much clarity does he pour out along with profundity of ideas and propriety of speech, that he fully convinces the sincere mind. Frequently

³⁷⁶ Cf. his *Comment. in I de Anima*, lect. 2, no. 30; in *II Metaph.*, lect. I, nis, 287-288; in *III Metaph.*, lect. I, no. 342; in *XII Metaph.*, lect. 9, no. 2566; in *I Ethic.*, lect. II, nis. 132-133; in *II Ethic.*, lect. I no. 246; in *Psalm. 43*, no. 1; *de Veritate*, q. 16, a 2c; *de Tocco, Vita S. Thomae*, cap. 21.

meeting with him never engenders aversion but rather promotes a continually new admiration for him. He inspires security of mind and joy in finding the truth, and at the same time he stimulates one's capacity and directs it safely in the search after new truths with free and bold spirit. As Leo XIII said: "Far from draining the power of the mind, he feeds it lasting and salutary food."³⁷⁷

With evident right, therefore, from the supreme intrinsic value of St. Thomas' doctrine, and from the most special approbation and commendation of the Church, we may conclude with J. de Guibert, S. J.:

By the very fact of anyone embracing the doctrine of St. Thomas, he embraces the doctrine most commonly accepted in the Church, safe and approved by the Church itself . . . ; when there is no grave contrary reason, the authority of St. Thomas suffices to prefer his opinion.³⁷⁸

This is not only true in theology to which he solely refers, but in philosophy as well; for there is one and the same force and approbation for both.

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³⁷⁷ *Gravissime nos*, loc. cit., 246.

³⁷⁸ *De Ecclesia Christi*, 386. (Rome, 1928).

THE PLACE OF TRADITION IN THE THEOLOGY OF ST. THOMAS

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IN its famous decree of the fourth session, dated April 8, 1546, the Council of Trent defined as a dogma of the Catholic faith that divine revelation is entirely contained in two sources, namely: the "written books" (*libri scripti*) and the "unwritten traditions" (*sine scripto traditiones*). The contents of the decree are indicated by the title: "The accepted sacred books and traditions of the Apostles" (*recipiuntur libri sacri et traditiones Apostolorum*).¹ Already the formula "traditions of the Apostles" by itself alone clearly indicates that the Council intended to limit the existence and the transmission of the "unwritten traditions" exclusively to the Apostles of Christ and therefore to the New Testament. It was not so for the "books." In fact the historic setting of the Council, that is to say the Protestant controversy, demonstrates beyond the shadow of a doubt that by the word "Scriptures" the Council intends to signify the two Testaments and consequently all the inspired books of these two Testaments. If the Council did not detail the different categories of the authors, the writers of these books,—on the contrary, the text of the decree explicitly mentions only the name of "Prophets" (a *collective* name to designate all the writers of the Old Testament)² and says not a single word about the writers of the New Testament,—the reason was that, from all the evidence at hand, the expression "written books" (sacred, holy) already designated

¹ *Concilium Tridentinum* (ed. Societas Goerresiana) t. V. *Actorum per altera* p. 91—the same text will likewise be found in Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* (1932) n. 783-784. Cf. Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, (Herder, 1941), pp. 18-20.

² St. Thomas likewise says that the canonical books have been written by the "Apostles and Prophets" (collective name) to designate all the authors of the New and Old Testaments, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. I, a. 8, ad 2 *et passim*.

sufficiently by itself a very definite group of writers whose names and qualifications were known by all. Moreover, the text of the decree itself expressly states, by way of refreshing the memory, that the Council "has thought it proper, moreover, to insert in this decree a list of the sacred books, lest a doubt might arise in the mind of someone as to which are the books received by this Council. They are the following." Thereafter follows a detailed list of these books, with their titles as commonly taken from the sacred writers of the two Testaments.

On the other hand, speaking of the "unwritten traditions," the text of the decree expressly mentions "the Apostles" of the Lord. The title of the decree is already rather significant, and the text of the decree expresses itself formally in three different modes upon this subject. In fact it declares that these "traditions" are those "which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand."³ Further on, it is repeated that they "relate to faith or morals," and that they are "as having been dictated either orally by Christ or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church in unbroken succession." Finally, all who would scornfully reject the books are anathematized, as well as any persons who . . . "knowingly and deliberately reject the aforesaid traditions." To this the text also adds that, from the Scriptures and from Tradition thus clearly indicated and determined, the Council will use "the chief witnesses and supports to whom it will appeal in the confirmation of dogmas and in the restoration of morals in the Church."

Thus, it was evident, that a pretended "knowledge of revelation" which would deny that Tradition is a source of Christian doctrine, would be only a heretical theology and a *scientia falsi nominis*. At the same time, such a theology would be condemned as being a garbled and an incomplete science.

³ The three variants (a propos of: *ab ipsius Christi ore, ab Apostolis acceptae, aut ab ipsis Apostolis* . . .) which can be read in the edition of Görresgesellschaft (cf. note 1) in no way change the meaning of the text.

It seems useful to recall this famous text of the Council of Trent as a most fitting introduction to the following study. It is, moreover, necessary because it puts us face to face with a problem of theology such as St. Thomas understood theology. As a matter of fact, St. Thomas Aquinas does not expressly mention the Traditions (or Tradition) as a source of his theological doctrine.⁴ We say: *he does not mention it explicitly*, which is to say that he does indeed mention it in one way or another. That is why a study which attempts to analyze, even briefly, the place of Tradition in the theology of the Angelic Doctor, must answer the following two questions:

1. What was St. Thomas' attitude toward the problem of Tradition as a source of theology?
2. What was his notion of Tradition and what use did he make of it?

Only an adequate response to these two closely connected questions will give us an accurate idea of the place of Tradition in the theological work of Aquinas.

1. *The Attitude of St. Thomas toward the Problem of Tradition as a Source of Theology.*

St. Thomas lived in the thirteenth century, whereas the Council of Trent took place in the sixteenth century, a fact of considerable consequence for this study. Always most careful about the teachings of the *Magisterium* of the Church, St. Thomas, whose theological and historical learning far outstripped that of his predecessors and contemporaries, must have been acquainted with the moving exhortation of Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241), *Ab Aegyptiis*, dated July 7, 1228 and directed to the theologians of Paris.⁵ In it he reminded the Masters of

⁴ In this study we use the word "Tradition" or "Traditions" indifferently, in the same sense for both.—The Vatican Council, session III, c. 3, gives the example when it teaches that "*credenda sunt, quae in verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continenter*," etc. Denzinger, *loc. cit.*, n. 1792; cf. also n. 1781. In the encyclical *Humani Generis* the word is equally used in the singular and it is uniformly placed between quotation marks ("*traditio*"). AAS (1950), 567, 568, 569, 575.

⁵ *Chart. Univ. Paris.*, t. 1, 114-115. The text can be read in Denzinger, *loc. cit.*, n. 442-443.

Sacred Science of the dangers of "*documenta terrena*," by which words the Pope meant the new philosophies; and he urged the theologians to adhere, after the example of the Holy Fathers, to the "understanding of the divine Scriptures, limited by the studies of the Fathers," to determined terms of expression. The Teaching Authority of the Church thus recalled, through the mouth of Gregory IX, that the role of the Masters of the Faculty of Theology was to remain God-teachers (*theodidacti*) or theologians (*theologi*) and not to become God-revealers (*theophanti*); at the same time, he prescribed for them the conduct and the duty they were to observe: "they should expose theology according to the approved traditions of the saints" (that is, the Fathers), and he wished to caution them against the 'idolatry' of those who "by force and even distorted expositions bend the sacred and divinely inspired words to the sense of the teaching of philosophers ignorant of God." He formally ordered them: "teach pure theology without the leaven of earthly knowledge, not adulterating the word of God (*II Cor.* 2:17) with the figments of philosophers."

A few years later, in 1231, William of Auxerre, Archdeacon of Beauvais and theologian of Paris, was commissioned to purify the works of Aristotle, in order to render them useful in theology "lest the useful be vitiated by the useless."⁶ (A few Aristotelian fragments, until then forgotten, had just been discovered. The doctors and theologians had acquired a taste for Aristotle, notwithstanding the initial prohibitions on the part of the religious authority.) Example of this purifying as well as utilization in favor of theological exposés had, moreover, been given by the Archdeacon of Beauvais in his *Summa Aurea*, which was widely read in the thirteenth century, and which had, it appears, a rather considerable influence upon the first doctors of the Order to which St. Thomas belonged.

Thus, therefore, the starting-point of true theology is Revelation; and what distinguishes it as a science of the Revealed

⁶ *Chart. Univ. Paris.*, t. 1, 143.

—the *maxime proprium* of theology—is “to argue from authority” (*argumentari ex auctoritate*).

As has just been seen from the document of Gregory IX, the task of the doctors of the thirteenth century was thus clearly indicated, the path to be followed well outlined: they were to follow the example of the Fathers, and therefore they were to adhere to what theology had always done: to give an understanding of the “sacred and divine inspired words” (*sacra eloquia divinitus inspirata*). This formula “sacred words” designated above all and throughout the course of centuries in the past both Testaments of the Scriptures, whose authors were the “asserters of divine grace, namely, the Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles,” as the Bull of Gregory IX also noted.⁷

It will not be surprising, therefore, to notice that St. Thomas, faithful to theology’s past, was strictly faithful also to those directives of the Teaching Authority of the Church.

Sacred doctrine, being, according to its nominal definition, a “theology or discourse about God” (*theologia, seu sermo Dei*) should be based upon and anchored in Scripture.⁸ And St. Thomas did just that. But theology is not the same thing as Scripture or Tradition. Theology is a human “science”; it should be the “science of the Scriptures.”⁹ The principles of this science must therefore be borrowed from the texts of the Scriptures. Now, according to Aristotle, whose theory in this matter was taken over by St. Thomas, a science must *argue* from principles in order to arrive at its conclusions drawn from these principles and based upon them. And these principles are

⁷ Gregory IX also indicates the authors of the Scriptures by collective names: “Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles.”

⁸ This nominal definition of Theology crops up frequently in St. Thomas, for example: *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 1, a. 7, *sed contra*; *ibid.*, a. 1, *objs.* 2-3; In *VI Metaphys.* lect. I (ed. Cathala, n. 1168); In *Boethium de Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 4. The definition “*theologia, sermo de Deo (de divinis)*” is already found in Simon de Tournai (d. circa 1201); cf. G. Paré, A. Brunet, P. Tremblay, *La Renaissance du XII^e siècle* (1933), 310, note 2 (d’après *Summa*). . . . Paris, Nat. lat. 14886, fol. I. r. and J. Warichez, *Les Disputationes de Simon de Tournai* (Louvain, 1932).

⁹ We can read in the works of the Medievalists,—as also in St. Thomas, *passim*—the explanation according to which the doctrine of the Scriptures was practically brought back to the content of the “*articuli fidei*,” principles of theological science.

known either from natural reason or through revelation contained in the Scriptures.

We will not be surprised, then, to find the general mode of procedure of St. Thomas in the *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 1, a. 8, obj. 2 and response, in regard to this problem. Objecting against the nature of theological doctrine, or at least against its manner of procedure, he writes:

If (sacred doctrine) is a matter of argument, the argument is either from authority or from reason. If it is from authority, it seems unbefitting its dignity, for the proof from authority is the weakest form of proof. But if from reason, this is unbefitting its end, because, according to Gregory (*Homil.* 26) *faith has no merit in those things of which human reason brings its own experience*. Therefore sacred doctrine is not a matter of argument.

St. Thomas answers by this famous text:

This doctrine is especially based upon arguments from authority, inasmuch as its principles are obtained by revelation: thus we ought to believe in the authority of those to whom the revelation has been made. Nor does this take away from the dignity of this doctrine, for although the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest.

The holy Doctor, therefore, teaches clearly and textually that theological doctrine must be based upon and anchored in revelation. That is why he concludes that those to whom (or by whom) the revelation is made (or given) must have our trust. To proceed in this wise is most proper to this science (*maxime proprium hujus doctrinae*), and it is, at the same time, all to the honor and dignity of this theological science. To account for and to explain how and why theology appeals, on the other hand, to natural reason, that is, to the principles of philosophy, he adds in the same text:

But sacred doctrine makes use even of human reason, not indeed, to prove faith . . . but to make clear other things that are put forward in this doctrine.

And he explains the fact that theology sometimes makes appeal to philosophy in these words:

Since therefore grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it, natural reason should minister to faith as the natural bent of the will ministers to charity. Hence the Apostle says: *Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ.* (II Cor., 10: 5). Hence sacred doctrine makes use also of the authority of philosophers in those questions in which they were able to know the truth by natural reason, as Paul quotes a saying of Avatus: *As some also of your own poets said: For we are also His offspring.* (Acts 17: 28).

This is sufficiently clear: natural truth known by the power of reason alone is also truth; it cannot, therefore, be in contradiction to truth known through revelation; consequently, it can be useful and can render service to the doctrine based upon the revealed *datum*. Truth does not contradict itself.

In the very same text, the Prince of Scholastics proceeds to establish the distinction and relative importance of the different categories of "authorities" (*auctoritates*). He writes:

Nevertheless, sacred doctrine makes use of these authorities (i.e., those of the philosophers) as extrinsic and probable arguments; but properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, yet merely as probable.¹⁰ For our faith rests upon the revelation made to the Apostles and Prophets, who wrote the canonical books, and not on the revelations (if any such there are) made to other doctors.¹¹

¹⁰ In this text, several words and expressions should be understood according to the sense which they had in the Middle Ages. Thus, for example, the expression "probabilia argumenta" or the word "probabiliter." Lexicographical studies of this kind will render immense services for the exact understanding of the ideas of the Medievalists. A lexicographical index of the works of St. Thomas would render the task of theologians much easier.

¹¹ By "Revelation made to the other doctors" St. Thomas does not mean that the non-canonical writers had a "divine inspiration" equal to that which the Church recognizes in the sacred writers designated (collectively) by "Apostles and Prophets." St. Thomas here echoes an opinion, rather widespread in the Middle Ages, according to which the Fathers were privileged writers, because in their way they, as doctors of the Faith, expound for us the revealed doctrine drawn from the sources of Revelation, under the vigilance of the Church and with her approbation: "for it is

Thus, the starting-point of true theology is revelation; and what distinguishes it as a science of the Revealed—the *maxime proprium* of theology—is “to argue from authority.”

We must look closely at the distinction of “authorities” established by St. Thomas, for their value in theology is unequal, since, according to his own words, this value depends as much upon the foundation upon which they rest as upon the role which they are called upon to play in theological argumentation.

St. Thomas, therefore, recognizes in Theology the use of certain “extrinsic and probable arguments” (*argumenta extranea et probabilia*), which supposes and implies that he distinguishes them from the category of arguments which this label does not fit; he mentions authorities of which theology makes use “properly, of necessity” (*proprie, ex necessitate*), which again supposes that he distinguishes them from those which the theologian does not use in that manner; finally, he speaks of a category which he qualifies with the title “properly but probably” (*ex propriis, sed probabiliter*). Utilizing St. Thomas’ own words, and for greater clarity, we may propose the following schema in accordance with his text: among the arguments of the “sacred doctrine,” there are:

proper

necessary = authority of the canonical Scriptures
(divine revelation)

probable = authority of the doctors of the Church
(Saints, Fathers)

necessary to preserve not only what has been handed down in the Sacred Scriptures, but also what has been said by the holy doctors who have preserved Sacred Scripture intact” (*Exp. de Div. Nom.*, cap. 2, lect.1). Thus it was said: “Let us see what the Holy Spirit says in the Fathers”; or again: “The Fathers, taught by the Holy Spirit,” etc., “whatever truth is said is from the Holy Spirit,” etc. In iconography certain Fathers, for example St. Ephrem, “the harp of the Holy Spirit,” St. Gregory, later St. Francis de Sales, etc. are precisely for this reason represented as bearing upon their shoulder a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. St. Thomas himself is sometimes portrayed in the same manner; ordinarily, however, he bears the figure of the sun upon his breast. Nor is it a question of “private revelations” which moreover are not the concern of theology properly so-called.

Arguments

<i>probable</i>	
proper	= authorities of the doctors of the Church (Saints, Fathers)
extrinsic	= authority of the philosophers (human reason)

Practically speaking, therefore, the famous text of the *Summa Theologica*, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2, makes mention of three categories of authorities for use by theology as a human and argumentative science namely:

the authority of Scripture
the doctors of the Church
philosophers

Since the authorities of the first category furnish reasons why one argues "properly, necessarily," we must conclude that, without them, we cannot discuss theology, because theology cannot exist without them. The authorities of the third category furnish reasons which constitute only extrinsic and probable arguments. These do not belong strictly to the proper domain of theology; they belong to it from without, "probable," i. e., "not proper arguments" (*argumenta probabilia*, i. e., *non propria*).

But there are also the authorities of the second category, which is a quasi-intermediate category, for they can be distinguished by a double epithet: in fact, they furnish us with reasons which are "proper but probable" (*ex propriis, sed probabiliter*), and thus they belong as much to the "proper" authority of the Canonical Scripture as to the probable authority of the philosophers. Yet, precisely because, on the one hand, they are not extrinsic (on the contrary, they are proper), and because, on the other hand, they are not necessary (on the contrary they are only probable), their importance and their value can be designated either by the expression "proper probably" (*propria probabiliter*), or by the expression "probable properly" (*probabilia ex propriis*). This means that in their way and according to their origin they can be classed

between the two, while at the same time preserving and possessing a proper value and physiognomy of their own.

It was absolutely essential for this study of the attitude of St. Thomas toward the problem of Tradition as a source of theology, to note this matter well. We willingly confess that this point alone poses a number of problems which need not be resolved here. But the subject is equally fruitful in consequences and it will prove useful to indicate a few of them.

"Tradition" is not explicitly mentioned as a source of theology in the famous text of the *Summa* of St. Thomas. Having stated the fact of this absence, a satisfactory explanation must be found for this seemingly strange fact.¹² Let us first of all dispel a few secondary difficulties. If St. Thomas did not mention Tradition, certainly it is not because he would have completely identified it with what we call the Teaching Authority (*Magisterium*) of the Church. Teaching Authority as such is not a source of Revelation, since it is solely its guardian and interpreter. Nevertheless, it is equally true that St. Thomas teaches that the *Magisterium* is intimately and indissolubly linked to the sources of Revelation. It is linked in such fashion as to be indispensable, because it alone has the exclusive right to give us an exact and authentic knowledge of what is taught by Scripture and Tradition.¹³ Elsewhere we have shown,—and we hope to return to the same subject later on,—that St. Thomas already taught this. Therefore, an answer must not be sought in that direction to the problem which concerns us here.

¹² In an article "The Place of Holy Scripture in the Theology of St. Thomas," (*The Thomist*, [1947] 398-422), J. van der Ploeg, O. P. primed the problem which concerns us at the moment. The author referred to one of our studies which appeared ten years ago (1941 and not 1938 as Fr. van der Ploeg notes on p. 419), in which we sketched in broad outline the solution to the problem. After ten years of research we still maintain the ideas expressed at that time. It is sufficient here merely to develop them.

¹³ For the texts, proofs and details, cf. G. Geenen, "De opvatting en de houding van den H. Thomas van Aquino bij het gebruiken der bronnen zijner theologie," in *Bijragen van de philosophische en theologische faculteiten der Nederlandsche Jezuïeten*, IV (1941) 112-146, 224-254; "Saint Thomas et les Pères," in *Dictionnaire de Théologie*, art. "Saint Thomas," VII, t. xv (fasc. 139-1940), col. 738-761.

It is equally true that St. Thomas, following the example of his predecessors and thus making himself an authorized witness of the past of Catholic theology, did not identify Tradition with the teachings of the Fathers, as certain modern authors however have taught. Quite the contrary: he very often used his prerogative as critic of the doctrines of certain Fathers and of their exposition of doctrine or of the formulas which they used. But he never allowed himself such conduct with respect to the sources of Revelation. He prized even the formulas and expressions of Scripture as being, under the aegis of the Teaching Authority, sufficiently clear. He teaches that expert theology could not better explain revealed truth than the sacred writers had already done.¹⁴ Moreover, in the text of the *Summa* quoted above, it seems clear that for him the Fathers were not a source of Revelation, since he teaches that the use of their "authorities" in theology, is different from that of the "authorities" of Scripture, precisely because they are not authors to whom Revelation has been made. We might add that the great Scholastic does not appear to be acquainted with "unanimous consent of the Fathers," nor the "consent of the bishops" as an *argument* to prove *apodictically* that such or such doctrine belongs to the deposit of Revelation.

We cannot pause here to demonstrate all this in detail from the very text of St. Thomas, lest we prolong unduly this study. It is sufficient to point out these facts which, moreover, will be discussed in the second part of this study. For St. Thomas, revealed truth is found in the Scriptures and the "Tradition of the Apostles," and it is taught to us by the Universal Church, i. e., the Pope, as head of the Universal Church, and by the

¹⁴ "De divinis non de facili debet homo aliter loqui quam Sacra Scriptura loquatur." *Contra errores Graecorum*, cap. 1—"Joannes . . . nomine Verbi pro Filio utitur, nec est aliter loquendum de divinis quam Sacra Scriptura loquatur" *De Potentia*, q. 9, a. 9, ad 7.—"De Deo dicere non debemus quod in Sacra Scriptura non invenitur vel per verba, vel per sensum," *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 36, a. 2, ad 1; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 2, apropos of the definition of faith in *Hebrews*, 11: 1; *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 4, a. 1, *ibid.*, III, q. 60, a. 8, ad 1; *In III Sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, sol. 3, ad. 2, 3, 4. This principle of method was borrowed from Dionysius, the pseudo-Areopagite, *De Div. Nom.*, cap. 1; cf. St. Thomas, lect 1.

Ecumenical Councils under the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff.

The teaching of the Fathers,—the majority of whom were bishops,—is not an organ of Faith save in the measure that this teaching is conformable to, and faithfully translates, the teaching of the Pope, the head of the Universal Church. But in the last analysis, it is to the Church, i. e., to the Pope as head of the Universal Church, that we must have recourse in order to know what is revealed doctrine, for it is his Teaching Authority which is the authentic and definitive norm.¹⁵ It may appear to some that, after all this, the solution of the problem becomes only the more complicated and difficult. In reality, the elimination of these secondary aspects puts us squarely on the road to a solution.

St. Thomas recognized Tradition as a source of Revelation. His historical and critical sense, all too little recognized by some, and especially his genius for Catholic theology made him repeat with the Scriptures, with the documents of the Sovereign Pontiffs, with the acts of the Ecumenical Councils and with the whole history of the Church's past that, in addition to the Scriptures, there was also a "Tradition of the Apostles" (*Traditio Apostolorum*) or a "Tradition of the Church" (*Traditio Ecclesiae*). The second part of this study will furnish us an opportunity to return to this point in greater detail. And if the texts of the *Summa* seem to say that all Revelation was sufficiently expressed in and by the Scriptures, as they are taught by the Church, the fact is that St. Thomas placed them on the plane of *the theological technique of his time*. According to this technique, anchored in and completely built upon the "authority" (in the medieval sense of the term), it appeared to him both possible and necessary to associate theological science with the Scriptures alone. This does not mean that, for him, Scripture alone contained all Revelation, even less does it signify that Scripture alone and of itself taught all the principles which medieval theology needed in order to con-

¹⁵ Compare *Quodlibetum*, II, a. 7 with *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 10, a. 12.

strut its scientific edifice according to the rules and the technical method proper to it.¹⁶

St. Thomas, then, does not deny that Tradition is a source of theology, notwithstanding the fact that he does not speak of it *explicitly* in his famous text. As a matter of fact, at the time when St. Thomas was writing the first question of the *Summa* (about 1267) he had already written a goodly number of theological works. Now, in these earlier works, he had already, *occasione data*, taught again and again, although often in scattered texts, the sufficiency of the Scriptures for theological work. Yet at the same time he had shown clearly and expressly, —either by scattered texts, or by concrete examples,—that Tradition is a source of his theology. Without fear of mistake or exaggeration it may even be said that the sacramentology of St. Thomas, as taught in the *Summa*, is above all dependent on a doctrine and on practices which were known only through Tradition. Doubtless, it is not always easy to state what is the exact range and the precise meaning of certain formulas, such as “teaching of faith, tradition of the faith, tradition of the Church, tradition of the Apostles,” etc., which we have taken from his works. Later on we hope to devote a special monograph to this subject. Nor is it always easy to verify whether in such circumstances Aquinas is speaking of a source clearly distinct from the Scriptures, in that Tradition was for him a source containing truths that are in no way found in the Scriptures. Here arises a host of problems, each one of which must be studied separately if we would arrive at even a partially

¹⁶ Cf. *Diction. Theol. Cath.*, *loc. cit.*, col. 756-757. Saint Robert Bellarmine and Cardinal Newman taught the same thing. See Vacant, *Études théologiques sur les constitutions du Concile du Vatican*, t. 1 (1895), 376. If Vacant is of the opinion (*ibid.*, note 1), that this position is not tenable, it is because he had not sufficiently read, or had poorly understood, the texts of St. Thomas, and because he seems not to have been aware of the theological technique of the Medievalists. It is true that his work appeared a half century ago and that the profound and methodical study of their technique did not begin until later. The sequel of our article will show that Vacant's reproach has no foundation, since he did not place the problem on the terrain demanded, and he did not envisage it from the same point of view as did St. Thomas.

concrete view of the ensemble. And it is to be desired that the number and the capability of those with the courage and the devotion to undertake these patient and difficult researches will become greater and greater.

For the moment we are going to limit ourselves to the citation of a few texts in which St. Thomas affirms the *existence of Tradition as a source of theology*.

1) To the objection: "the worship of images is not found expressly in Sacred Scripture," Aquinas makes answer: "the Apostles handed down many things which were not written in the Canon, one of which concerns the use of images."¹⁷

2) He teaches that the doctrine of original sin is known to us through revelation: "According to the tradition of the Catholic faith, it must be held that men are born with original sin." "We are taught from the Tradition of the Church that the whole human race is infected by sin."¹⁸

3) In commenting on the text of St. Paul, *II Thess.*, 2:14, he writes:

"Paul taught that they might hold to the Traditions and documents which had been decreed by the Apostles and elders, who were at Jerusalem . . . and he published these Traditions in a two-fold way; some by words, wherefore he says: through speech (*per sermonem*); some in writing, thus he adds: or by letter (*sive per epistolam*). Wherefore it is clear that many things not written in the Church have been taught by the Apostles, and therefore must be preserved. For in the judgment of the Apostles, it was better that many things be hidden, as Denis says."¹⁹

4) Likewise in the *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 25, a. 3, ad 4, where he takes up again the objection against the worship of images: "Scripture does not set down anything concerning the worship of images," he answers:

The Apostles, led by the inward instinct of the Holy Ghost, handed down to the Church certain instructions which they did not put

¹⁷ *In III Sent.*, d. 9, q. 1, sol. 2, ad 3.

¹⁸ *IV C. Gentes*, 50, 54.

¹⁹ *In IV Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 3, ad. 1.

in writing, but which have been ordained, in accordance with the observance of the Church as practiced by the faithful as time went on. Wherefore the Apostle [that is, St. Paul, whose objection had been the text of *I Cor.*, 11: 23] says (*II Thess.*, 2: 14): *Stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word—that is by word of mouth—or by our epistle—that is by word put into writing.* Among these traditions is the worship of Christ's image.

5) In the *Summa Theologica*, in the treatise on Baptism, III, q. 64, a. 2, ad 1, he is to refute the following objection: "In the sacraments certain things are done which are nowhere mentioned in Holy Scripture; for instance, etc." He answers:

Those things that are essential to the sacraments, are instituted by Christ Himself, Who is God and man. And though they are not all handed down by the Scriptures, yet the Church holds them from the intimate tradition of the Apostles, according to the saying of the Apostle (*I Cor.*, 11: 34): *The rest I will set in order when I come.*"

6) The institution of certain sacraments is not known to us except by Tradition.²⁰

7) Commenting on certain formulas of the *de Divinis Nominibus* of Denis the pseudo-Areopagite, St. Thomas tells us that certain truths are taught us by the

"hidden veils of words, that is, of the Holy Scripture and the 'Tradition of the hierarchies,' that is, of the other dogmas which the Apostles and their disciples handed down, which are not contained in Holy Scripture, as for instance those things which pertain to the rites of the sacred mysteries."

8) In Catholic Mariology, he points out several truths which are solely attached to Tradition: "Concerning the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin . . . nothing is handed down

²⁰ In *IV Sent.*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 1, sol. 3, ad 1. The first sentence of this citation "Paulus docebat. . . . Jerosolymis" is an allusion to *Acts*, 15: 41 and 16: 4-5. In the absence of a critical edition of this commentary of St. Thomas, we retain the lesson "non scripta, sunt ab Apostolis doctis docta, etc." in place of "non-scripta sunt ab Apostolis docta" according to the Parma and Marietti editions.

in the canonical Scriptures; indeed, they do not even make mention of her nativity." And referring to the authority of St. Augustine (in reality the pseudo-Augustine) he teaches: "that her body (the Blessed Virgin's) was assumed into heaven, and yet Scripture does not relate this."²¹

These few texts, taken at random, show us that St. Thomas, living in the thirteenth century was perfectly aware of what the Council of Trent would proceed to teach three centuries later, in its famous decree on the "Sacred Books" and the "Traditions of the Apostles." In fact, summing up the texts cited above, we can state that St. Thomas taught:

- Together with the Scriptures there exists an oral Tradition (texts 4, 1, 6).
- This Tradition is a source of Revelation; it comes from Christ (texts 5, 6).
- This Tradition dates back to and is linked up with the Apostles (texts 5, 1, 3, 4, 7).
- This Tradition of the Apostles has for its Author the Holy Spirit (text 4).
- This Tradition is maintained in and taught by the Church (texts 4, 3, 2).
- This Tradition is as much a source of dogmas as of Christian practices founded upon Catholic dogma (texts 4, 7).
- This Tradition teaches us certain truths of the Catholic Faith as, for example, the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and the existence of certain sacraments,—which are not explicitly expressed in the Scriptures (texts 8, 7).
- This Tradition has its place in the exposition of the problems of "sacred doctrine," that is, in Theology (texts 3, 4).
- The formula for designating this source of Revelation in and

²¹ *Summa Theol.*, III, q. 27, a. 1 c. The "auctoritas" to which St. Thomas here makes appeal is that of the pseudo-Augustine, well known in the controversy of the high Middle Ages, author of the *Assumption of the Virgin Mary*, and who would in fact be Peter the Venerable (d. 1156) according to the report of Fr. Barré, in *Journées de la société française d'études mariales*, held at Notre Dame du Chêne (Sarthe) on September 12-14, 1949. (Cf. *Marianum* (1949), 510-511)—For the attitude of St. Thomas vis à vis the pseudo-epigraphic literature, cf. G. Geenen: "St. Thomas d'Aquin et ses sources pseudépigraphiques," in *Ephem. Theol. Lovan.* (1943), 71-80.

- taught by the Church is sometimes in the plural (traditions), sometimes in the singular (tradition). (texts 2, 4).
- This formula is presented with variations (Tradition of the Church, Tradition of the Catholic faith, observance of the Church) (texts 2, 4).
 - The Church possesses this Tradition “through the succession of the faithful” (*per successionem fidelium*) (text 4). In fact, we touch here upon all the points which the Council of Trent taught with reference to the existence and the nature of Tradition.

With all this in mind, it is to be wondered, and not without reason, why the Angelic Doctor did not also make explicit mention of Tradition, among the “authorities” (*auctoritates*) of “sacred doctrine.” How must this fact, at once so obvious and so disconcerting, be explained? The principal, if not the sole reason that can be offered, must be sought, on the one hand, in a Scholastic procedure well known to the Medievalists, namely the medieval technique of Scholastic Theology, and, on the other hand, in the very nature of Tradition itself. Moreover, these two elements are so intimately connected that we may say they are but two different aspects of the same procedure.

By way of explanation, it can be noted again that the medieval theology of the great Scholastics was anchored in the “*auctoritas*.” Now, “*auctoritas*” was the text itself which Theology had at its disposal. It was with this very precise signification that the word was used in the schools of that time.²² That means that when appeal was made to the “authority of Augustine” for example, the text of St. Augustine was above all signified, the *material expression*, the word, the formula, the adage of the author. The word “authority” (*auctoritas*), therefore, did not designate, at least not in the first place, the “sense” (*sensus*), the content, the thing or

²² For these semantics of the word “*auctoritas*” see for example: M. D. Chenu, O. P., *Introduction on l'Étude de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Publications de l'Institut d'études médiévales de l'université de Montreal, XI (1950), 106-113. Cf. G. Geenen, *De opvatting en de houding, etc.* *loc. cit.*, 119, note 13.

truth affirmed by the text, but rather the "saying" (*dictum*) or the "sayings" (*dicta*) of the author cited,—in other words, the *material statement*.²³ "The authorities of the canonical Scriptures, of the doctors of the Church, of the philosophers" discussed in the *Summa* I, q. 1, a. 8, signified, therefore, according to the thinking of the time, the material expression, the text of the Scriptures, of the doctors, of the philosophers.

When appeal was made to the "*auctoritas*" there was no question, in the first place, of the intrinsic value, but of its *extrinsic value*; it was a question of the *written text*, of the value which was recognized in it and the weight it carried due to the official recognition which the text possessed and which gave it the right to be cited in theological argumentation. It should be clearly noted that the "*auctoritas*" was cited in order to support a doctrine; the content of the text had its importance, the affirmation expressed by the "*dictum*" was neither denied nor disowned; but for all that, it still remains that it was, so to speak, presupposed to the text, since it was contained and translated by the text. For the Scriptures, there was no difficulty in admitting, with the "*auctoritas*," the contents of the latter and the teaching which it represented. Being a "Scripture divinely inspired," the meaning of which was authentically explained by the Teaching Authority of the Church,²⁴ and having as authors the hagiographers "who wrote the canonical books," the truth of the Scriptures was guaranteed by God Himself, the principal author of the Sacred Books.

²³ "Si *diversorum dicta* (Patrum) ad convenientiam reducere volumus, quod tamen necessarium non est, potest dici quod auctoritates quae . . . exponendae sunt" (*In II Sent.*, d. 2, p. 1, a. 3, ad 1.) "*dicta philosophorum*" (*ibid.*, d. 14, q. 1, a. 2, ad 1); "*dicta Patrum*" (*Contra errores Graecorum*, epilogus), etc.

²⁴ "Now the formal object of faith is the First Truth, as manifested in Holy Writ and the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth. Consequently whoever does not adhere, as to an infallible and Divine rule, to the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth manifested in Holy Writ, has not the habit of faith." (*Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. 5, a. 3). "Faith adheres to all the articles of faith by reason of one mean, viz. on account of the First Truth proposed to us in the Scriptures, according to the Teaching of the Church who has the right understanding of them. Hence whoever abandons this mean is altogether lacking in faith" (*ibid.*, ad 2).

Such texts also enjoyed an absolute intrinsic value. But from the viewpoint of technical theology, it was purely a secondary aspect, albeit a further motive for guaranteeing and motivating their use, for these "authorities of the canonical Scriptures" were "proper and necessary arguments," and this the more so since "the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest." The other "dicta" of which St. Thomas speaks,—authorities of the doctors and of the philosophers,—while they have the real value of *auctoritas*, will be only "proper but probable arguments" (*argumenta propria, sed probabiliter*) (*probabilia ex propriis*), or pure and simple "probable and extrinsic arguments" (*argumenta probabilia extranea*).

As a good medieval theologian of the thirteenth century, St. Thomas respected his profession as a theologian and he paid all honor to it through the conscientious observance of the elementary rules of the technique of the School in the structure of his theological work. Thenceforth everyone will readily understand that "Tradition" is absent in the famous text of the *Summa*, since it was difficult to introduce Tradition as such into the theological technique. In fact, Tradition by its very definition is the source of revealed truths which exist "*sine scripto*," which were *not written*. And a truth known by way of Tradition (considered as a source distinct from the Scriptures) was a "word of God handed down" (*verbum Dei traditum*) as the Vatican Council later declared.²⁵ Appeal, indeed, would not be made to a text which does not exist! It is, therefore, in this sense that we said above that theological science was practised with the Scriptures only. Evidently, this does not mean that the medieval theologian, like every other Catholic theologian, could not and should not have recourse to Tradition to explain "sacred doctrine,"—we have cited a few texts of St. Thomas where he himself precisely gives the example of the contrary,—*but the theologian could do so only when that Tradition was presented under the form of "auctoritas," accord-*

²⁵ Denzinger, *loc. cit.*, n. 1792-1781.

ing to the rules of the theological technique of the Medievalists. It must be remembered that in the time of St. Thomas the "philosophers," stimulated by the revival of their studies, thanks to a better and a more ample use of the works of Aristotle, blamed the "theologians" for the fact that the work of the latter was not a "science" or at least, it was not presented in a "scientific" aspect. According to these "philosophers," science was not possible except when there was a "*discursus demonstrativus*" and "*argumentativus*," since "science," being a "certain and evident knowledge through causes," was also a "habit of discoursing or deducing conclusions."

Now "to deduce conclusions" supposes that there are "principles." Theology as science should itself then begin with principles. In the first question of the *Summa Theologica*, which is in substance an introduction to all the rest, in order to establish the *raison d'être* of "sacred doctrine," St. Thomas undertook the task of answering this reproach of the "philosophers." He demonstrated to its adversaries that it is truly a "science,"²⁶ which, while being a "science subordinate to the science of God and the blessed" has a procedure that is "argumentative and deductive." He demonstrated that the principles of this science are the truths revealed by God. The believer is in possession of these principles through the "habit of faith" which enjoys in theology the same role as the "habit of first principles" of every science worthy of the name. Having thus exposed his program and his concept of theology as a *doctrina sacra*, he could begin and tranquilly continue his work. Sure of his position, it was sufficient for him to repeat, from time to time, that the "reasons" furnished by the "sacred authors" and "holy men" to prove "things that are of faith" were not always solely "certain persuasions showing that what is proposed to our faith is not impossible," but sometimes also

²⁶ This does not mean that St. Thomas restricted the function of theology to the single role of drawing conclusions. But he wanted to teach that this role is likewise suitable to theology. Apropos of this read the long note of our article: *De opratting en de houding—loc. cit.*, 147, note 64.

are drawn from principles of faith, i. e., from the authority of Holy Writ, as Denis discloses (*Div. Nom.* 2). Whatever is based on these principles is as well proved in the eyes of the faithful, as a conclusion drawn from self-evident principles is in the eyes of all. Hence again, theology is a science, as we stated at the outset of this work.²⁷

Let us remember this little text: *hence again theology is a science*, for it is full of consequence and it speaks volumes concerning the background of the affirmation which it reveals. St. Thomas had not forgotten his first question. Hence we have, according to the technical procedure of medieval theology with relationship to Tradition, the explanation of the fact that St. Thomas did not explicitly mention Tradition also as a source of his theology.

2. *The Notion of Tradition and its Use by St. Thomas.*

It now remains for us to answer the question: how then did Tradition make its entry into the technique of theology such as St. Thomas practised it? A complete and adequate answer to this question would go beyond our present limits, because, before solving this problem we should have to know precisely what opinion St. Thomas had as to the nature of Tradition, what are, according to him, the organs of this Tradition, and especially what use he made of it. For all of this a synthetic study must be minutely made of texts scattered about in his works, through which he exposes his idea in this regard, as well as an analytic study of several concrete cases through which the holy Doctor allows us to glimpse, by his practice and examples, what was his concept of the nature of Tradition. It may suffice here to give the salient lines. We shall sketch the solution by indicating the principal aspects of the problem.

As has been seen, *Tradition has a real and indispensable place in the theology of St. Thomas*. It enters therein on the same level and by the same title as the Scriptures: it is a source of Revelation. *But its entry is an indirect one*, and why? Because, of itself it is not a written text, that is, an

²⁷ *Summa Theol.*, II-II, q. I, a. 5, ad 2.

“authority” (*auctoritas*). It enters in the form and the manner of a text (*auctoritas*) namely, by the statements (*dicta*), i. e. the written documents (*scripta*) (*auctoritas*) of the Teaching Authority of the Church (Pope, Councils) and likewise by the statements of the doctors and saints (*dicta doctorum et sanctorum*) who have repeated and taught us the doctrine of this *Magisterium*. Now it is evident that all these “authorities” which are by nature and origin different, do not have the same value nor the same importance, since all these organs of Tradition are not uniformly joined to Revelation, and all of them do not translate its content with the same guarantee of fidelity and veracity. St. Thomas himself distinguished the “authority of Scripture” from the “authority of the doctors” according to the value which they had (*proprie ex necessitate; ex propriis probabiliter*). The hierarchy of these organs and the importance which they merit in theology must therefore be studied. We shall do so later on, when we study what St. Thomas understands by the “*Magisterium*, custom of the Church, doctrine of faith, doctrine of the Church, Catholic doctrine, Fathers, etc.”

Meanwhile, we must first state that the argument drawn from Tradition is bound up with *that drawn from the Scriptures*, because it is the Teaching Authority of the Church which is the guardian and the interpreter of the two sources of Revelation, and because it is the Teaching Authority which teaches both authentically, by telling us what is the “traditional” meaning of the Scriptures. For the Scriptures and Tradition are so intimately connected that it is impossible to understand the one without at the same time appealing to the other.²⁸

²⁸ According to all that has preceded,—especially the assertion that the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and the existence of certain sacraments are not expressly mentioned in Scripture,—it appears, therefore, that the expression of Fr. Van der Ploeg is not a happy one when he writes: “Holy Scripture was for him (St. Thomas) by far the *principal source of faith, especially with regard to the more speculative doctrines*.” (*loc. cit.*, 419). It would be more exact to say that for St. Thomas Scripture is a source of *theology*, developed according to the medieval technique. Even more, there still remains to be determined subsequently whether or not it is the *principal* source, since Tradition occupies a real place,

A few texts and examples of trinitarian theology as expounded by St. Thomas furnish us magnificent examples demonstrating this truth. Thus, it is true that even a truth "which Scripture does not contain" (explicitly, that is) has some support in Scripture. If, from the viewpoint of "authority," Scripture is a source of theology, so will Tradition be at the same time. For the "text" of Scripture is already an expression of Tradition, since the meaning of the Scripture—the truth expressed—is the very one which Tradition gives to it through the expression of the Teaching Authority of the Church (Pope, Councils).

Thus, Tradition is a real and an indispensable, albeit indirect, source of the theology of St. Thomas, as we believe we have demonstrated by his very own words. We say: 1) *Really* and *indispensably*, because Tradition contains Revelation. 2) *Indirectly*, because, although not being in itself an "authority" such as was demanded by the medieval technique, it does assume, nevertheless, this quality of a "written text" when we consider it in the inspired text or in the texts of the Popes and the Councils. St. Thomas never missed an opportunity to criticize the expressions (and sometimes the doctrine) of the Fathers, because the texts of these authors were for him but proper and probable arguments (*argumenta propria probabiliter* or *probabilia ex propriis*). Yet, never did he criticize the expression of the Scriptures, the Popes, or the Councils. Indeed, quite the contrary: he always considered them as being the best and therefore the sufficient expression of revealed doctrine. And when there was question of a few exceptional cases where the Teaching Authority of the Church expressed the doctrine of faith

albeit an indirect one, thanks to the texts of the *Magisterium* of the Church. It would have been better to have said that, *in fact*, St. Thomas appeals almost exclusively to Scripture. And finally, certain doctrines, for example that of the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, the sacramentary doctrine, the sacramental character, etc., must not be excluded from what is commonly called "speculative doctrine." Thus, for example, Pius IX taught that the Immaculate Conception is contained not only in the "*divina eloquia*" but also in the "*veneranda traditio*" (Bull *Ineffabilis*). Pius XII wrote that the Assumption of Mary "*inititur Sacris Litteris, Munificentissimus Deus*, AAS (1950), 769; cf. p. 764.

with words that are extra-scriptural, as for example the "*Theotokos*" or the "*homo-ousion*," he felt duty-bound to show that, as a matter of fact, these new words corresponded in their own way to the words of Scripture. Likewise he seeks to find the Catholic doctrine concerning the divine "processions" in the word "*procedere*" which is to be found in Scripture,²⁹ and that of the procession of the Holy Spirit "*ab utroque*" in the word "*accipere*" likewise to be found there.³⁰

In conclusion, we may use this passage because it fittingly illustrates all that has just been said. St. Thomas writes:

We ought not to say about God anything which is not found in Holy Scripture either explicitly or implicitly. But although we do not find it verbally expressed in Holy Scripture that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son, still we do find it in the sense of Scripture, *especially* where the Son says, speaking of the Holy Ghost, *He will glorify Me, because He shall receive of mine*.³¹

The holy Doctor concluded from this, that the text "Spirit of Truth, Who proceeds from the Father" (cited in the objection to support the fact that the Holy Spirit proceeds *solely* from the Father according to the expressed text of Scripture itself) does not contradict the doctrine of the "*ab utroque*," since the Church teaches us the doctrine of the "procession from the Son." To substantiate the Catholic doctrine according to which the Spirit *also* proceeds from the Son, St. Thomas cites the text of *John*, 16: 14, and rightly so, since this doctrine—which according to St. Thomas is not found literally (i. e., *per verba*, explicitly) in Scripture³²—teaches that in the Holy Trinity

²⁹ *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 27, a. 1. Having cited the text "Ego ex Deo processi" (*John*, 8: 42) in the argument *sed contra*, in order to broach the problem, he concludes, after explaining how this procession must be understood according to Catholic doctrine: "*Et sic fides catholica processionem ponit in divinis*."

³⁰ *Ibid.*, q. 36, a. 2, ad 1.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² By this word we mean to state that Scripture does not employ *totis litteris* the word "*procedere*" when it speaks of the "*processio Spiritus Sancti a Filio*." Moreover it is the Church's prerogative to say what is the true "litteral" meaning of the word "*accipere*" in Trinitarian theology.

there cannot be, and there is not an "*accipere*" which is not at the same time a "*procedere*."

Moreover, to cut short all objection, St. Thomas then unfolds his famous principle of the "exclusive term." He writes:

It is also a rule of Holy Scripture that whatever is said of the Father, applies to the Son, although there be added an exclusive term; except only as regards what belongs to the opposite relations, whereby the Father and the Son are distinguished from each other.

And he supports this with an example to prove and confirm what he has just said:

For when the Lord says (*Matt. 11: 27*), *No one knoweth the Son, but the Father*, the idea of the Son knowing Himself is not excluded. So therefore when we say that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, even though it be added that He proceeds from the Father alone, the Son would not thereby be at all excluded.

Why must it be said then that, even though Scripture might have said that the Holy Spirit does proceed from the Father and solely from Him, he proceeds also and equally from the Son? St. Thomas answers:

Because as regards being the principle of the Holy Ghost the Father and the Son are not opposed to each other, but only as regards the fact that one is the Father and the other is the Son.³³

"Tradition" has a real place in the theology of Aquinas, since at times it is due to Tradition alone that we can arrive at an understanding of the Scriptures and that we can demonstrate that, even Scriptural texts, which at first sight and *secundum litteram* seem to affirm the contrary of revealed doctrine, express in fact this revealed doctrine such as it is taught by the Church. The "*Filioque*,"³⁴ a formula of extra-scriptural

³³ The same canon of Trinitarian theology is repeated, under another form, in the responses to objections 4 and 6, apropos of a patristic "*auctoritas*" and concerning a principle (*auctoritas*) of grammatical, philosophical language.

³⁴ St. Thomas cites the text under the name of Athanasius because he doubtless wanted to cite a Greek witness in this controversy between the East and the West, all the more so in that he still believed, with all his contemporaries, that the Creed "*Quicumque*" was really from the hand of the great Alexandrian. This

origin, contains “ expressly ” and explicitly what was not found in Scripture except “ *per sensum*,” since “ *in divinis* ” the “ *accipere* ” is—according to Catholic doctrine—a “ *procedere*.” The holy Doctor was not afraid to go even further than the objection dared to do, in order to show how Tradition entered into theology indirectly under the form of *auctoritas*. We hope to have occasion later to develop this in an article wherein will be studied the understanding of the Angelic Doctor concerning the nature of Tradition and the use he made of it. Then only shall we have an exact and a complete perspective of the place which Tradition occupies in the theology of the Prince of Scholastics.

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pseudo-epigraphy in no way weakens the value of the *auctoritas*, as we have pointed out elsewhere. Cf. *De opvatting en de houding*, etc., *loc. cit.*, 134-135 and 236-237.

TIME AND THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ETERNAL WORLD

HE who wishes to understand creation philosophically cannot neglect the problem of the nature of time and its bearing upon the hypothesis that an order of created things could have coexisted from eternity with God. Now this hypothesis clearly raises the problem of the beginning of things. Since a world eternal in the sense of having an endless duration *a parte ante* still would be temporally eternal, we have on our hands a nest of problems, not the less thorny for being ancient, centering around time: Is it possible, without self-contradiction, to conceive of a non-temporal origination of time? How, if at all, can time be understood to have begun? How, if at all, can it be understood to have possibly existed always? These and allied questions are vitally important in the doctrine of creation as a whole. The problem of understanding the act of creation in relation to its effects is involved, specifically as regards the latter's duration, as well as the problem of the relation of the effects to the Author of that act. Respecting the first of these problems, we may recall, for instance, that the act of creation, being God's own proper act, is one with Himself and therefore is eternal in the mode wherein He Himself is eternal. This act then is outside of time, yet its effect—the world, the order of things other than God—is undoubtedly in time. Could it have been in time from all eternity and nevertheless have originated? Of course it must have originated, for everything other than God was and is being created by God. On the other hand, it is not less easy to indicate how the problem of time and an "eternal" world bears upon that of understanding the relation of passive creation, namely, the total dependency in being of the creature upon God.¹ This relation is not really grasped unless

¹ See my article, "Creation as a Relation," *The New Scholasticism*, XXIV (July 1950), pp. 263-283.

it is seen to be *per se* independent of time. And yet all creatures in their natural state, at least, seem to exist in time.² Is a successive duration infinite *a parte ante* really compatible with created being as such? If so, how can this compatibility be conceived and explained?

1. CREATED BEING AND ETERNAL DURATION

In a broad sense of the term, time is a measure of motion or change of every kind.³ It is important to notice that the essence of time—time as time—consists in measurable successive-ness, not (any more than does the essence of eternity) in beginninglessness and endlessness. For even if time never began and will never end,⁴ it still must retain its measurably successive character.⁵ Observe further that even if time and a world had always been, they could not be said to exist “coeternally” with God. Eternity, properly so called, is found only in God, Who alone has being and life simultaneously whole in an

² Even intellectual substances, whose duration is aeviternal, participate in time; for, though their substantial being is not subject to change, they are transmutable as regards the accidental being of their immanent and transient operations, of their thoughts, volitions, and local changes. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 10, a. 5, c. and ad 2.

³ We need not be concerned with a technical analysis of the meaning of the celebrated Aristotelian definition: “Time is the number of motion in respect of *before* and *after*” (IV *Physic.*, cap. 11; 220a 23). Here it is sufficient, I think, to describe time in terms which, though very general, nevertheless indicate clearly its essential character. In fact, St. Thomas himself, following Aristotle, recognizes this broad sense of “time”: *Dicitur magis communiter numerus ejus quod habet quocumque modo prius et posterius*. I *Sent.*, dist. VIII, q. 3, a. 3, ad 4; cf. Aristotle, *Physic.*, loc. cit. “Motion” can be understood to stand for actual succession, transition, or change of every kind. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 10, a. 1; q. 53, a. 3. The motion of which time is the measure may consist in succession of any sort, including that of purely spiritual acts, like those of the intellect; thus we have “tempus mensurans simplices conceptiones intellectus, quae sunt sibi succedentes.” I *Sent.*, loc. cit.

⁴ As Aristotle argued: E.g., *Physic.*, loc. cit., 219b 9—222b 8.

⁵ Cf. I *Sent.*, dist. XIX, q. 2, a. 1, sol. The material factor, so to speak, of time is the successive-ness in actual change, whereas the formal factor is the “measurement,” the “enumeration,” as the classical Aristotelian doctrine has it, which is supplied by the intellect. *Ibid.*; cf. I *Sent.*, dist. XXXVII, q. 4, a. 3, sol.

immutable present. The duration of an always-existing world would be successive.⁶

Can any creature have existed always? Obviously this is a question about possibility.⁷ In what sense, or senses, is the term "can" to be understood here? The word "potency" (more broadly, "possibility") is used sometimes to signify real power, sometimes not.⁸ Used in the first way, "potency" can denote either active power (ability to act) or passive power (ability to receive action or be acted upon); in the second way, it can have a purely metaphorical sense, as in mathematical "powers," or it can assert the absolute possibility of intrinsic logical non-repugnance.

Which, if any, of these four modes and meanings of "possibility" is involved in the proposition: Something other than God can have existed always?⁹ Clearly, possibility of active power is implied. God never lacked the power of producing something from all eternity. Since the divine *esse*, being pure act, suffers no limitation, neither does the divine power; for God's power is His being. Conversely, passive possibility in a certain sense¹⁰ is likewise entailed; for if God can have created always, something can have been created always. Of course, the realization of these correlative possibilities has been precluded by the revealed truth that God did not in fact make any creature to coexist with Him from eternity, not indeed because He could not have done so, but simply because He did not will to do so.

Since we are concerned with real possibility, the third (metaphorical) sense obviously does not apply. It is the fourth mode of possibility that is here most significant, namely, absolute

⁶ Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 14, ad 1 (replies to second set of Objections: "rationes oppositae").

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, corpus.

⁸ *Ibid.*; cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysic.*, Δ, 12; St. Thomas, V *Metaphys.*, lect. 14, n. 961-76.

⁹ Cf. *De Pot.*, *loc. cit.*

¹⁰ Possibility of passive power is excluded, because creation is not the actualization of a potentiality in the creature.

possibility, definable negatively as the absence of internal contradiction in intelligible being.

The principle governing the problem at hand is found in the simple statement that being-from-another is not repugnant to being-always.¹¹ There is nothing in the nature of caused being to prevent its existing from all eternity—if the being in question is created. When something proceeds from another by “motion,” by change of any sort, it must be posterior in time to its efficient cause. Creation, however, can be described only as an instantaneous act; and if an action is all-at-once, and not successive, the agent need not be prior in duration or in time to the effect produced.¹² The act of creating is not any species of change.¹³ Notwithstanding the general principle of the compossibility of created being with eternal being, there are some noteworthy arguments and ideas contrary to this principle, arising from the very attempt to conceive of an eternal created duration and especially of its beginning.

In dealing with these arguments, let us bear in mind the elementary fact that even if a world had always existed, its duration would not be eternal strictly speaking—not simultaneously whole, that is, but successive. Even so, an acute difficulty may be felt in the reflection that any conceivable world would necessarily be mutable in the most absolute sense: mutable with regard to its very existence. Are mutability and eternity really compatible? Certainly not, where “eternity” stands for the divine duration, yet they are, where “eternity” signifies infinite successive duration: “Variability by its very nature excludes eternity, but not infinite duration.”¹⁴ A world having infinite duration would be created. Such a world would

¹¹ *Hoc quod est esse ab alio, non repugnat ei quod est esse semper. De Pot., loc. cit.*

¹² Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 46, a. 2.

¹³ E. g., cf. II C. Gent., cap. 17. The theological argument: if to be from another were per se repugnant to being from eternity, the Son of God could not proceed from the Father (*De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 13), demonstrates that the repugnance in question is philosophically inadmissible. Nothing could be rationally possible if it implied a theological impossibility or contradiction.

¹⁴ *Variabilitas de sui ratione excludit aeternitatem, non autem infinitam durationem. De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 14, ad 3 (replies to second set of Objections).

originate without being "new." The problem of the meaning of this last statement will be treated presently. For the moment suffice it to recall that if the creative causality of God had been operative from eternity, some effect of it could have been always,¹⁵ and that, since God's act of creation proceeds freely from His will, it could have been operative always. Hence I should like to introduce an argument that is particularly significant for the understanding of creation as origination in the absolute mode.

No creature, this argument runs, could exist from eternity, because it is of very essence of eternity not to have a beginning, whereas it is of the very essence of created being to begin to be: "It is of the essence of the eternal not to have a principle, but it is of the essence of the creature to have a principle; therefore no creature can be eternal."¹⁶ Now the conclusion asserted does not follow, for though both premises are true, they are not true with respect to the same type of "principle": "It is of the essence of the eternal not to have a principle of duration; but it is of the essence of creation to have a principle of origin, though not of duration—unless 'creation' be taken as Faith takes it."¹⁷

The distinction is crucial. Observe, first, that St. Thomas has said it is of the essence of the eternal (*de ratione aeterni*) not to have a principle of duration (*principium durationis*). Does, or could, this imply that "the eternal," for St. Thomas, may have another sort of principle? It does, as the context shows. For here by "the eternal" is not meant that immutable, successionless duration exclusively possessed by and identified with God Himself; of course, God's eternity is absolutely without a principle of any kind. Here, as in various other places, St.

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, obj. 4 and ad 4.

¹⁶ *De ratione aeterni est non habere principium, de ratione vero creaturae est habere principium; ergo nulla creatura potest esse aeterna. Ibid.*, obj. 8 (second set of Objections).

¹⁷ *De ratione aeterni est non habere durationis principium; de ratione vero creationis est habere principium originis, non autem durationis; nisi accipiendo creationem ut accipit fides. Ibid.*, ad 8.

Thomas is using "the eternal" (*aeternum*) to signify that which exists and has existed "always" (*semper*), and thus has or had no "principle of duration," no inception *de novo*, no beginning. Now, as we have seen, the objection states that it is of the essence of the eternal not to have a principle.¹⁸ Were "the eternal" identified with the divine eternity, this last proposition would be true. Moreover, we should not lose sight of the fact that the verb "to have" in this entire context implies to-be-caused. Obviously, only causal *principia* are in question, for the problem is precisely the possibility of an "eternal" creation.

Clearly, then, it is contrary to the nature of the eternal, in the sense of that which is and has been always, to have a *principium durationis*: a first term, a beginning in the ordinary sense. On the other hand, created being that had existed always, or "from all eternity," would indeed enjoy an "infinite," a termless, duration, yet a successive one for all that. But in either case such being would have that absolute origination which the act of creation is; the absolute *principium* of its duration, whether infinite or finite, would lie necessarily in the creative act of God. The cause "eternal," as such, far from being incompatible with a *principium originis*, could not be without one. Everything other than God originates from God. This is what St. Thomas means by saying that it is of the essence of creation to have a *principium originis*, but not a *principium durationis*—an originative principle or source, but not a "durational" one, not a beginning.

It need hardly be remarked that the statement, every created being has a *principium originis*, is self-evident; to be a creature is to have originated. But since there is nothing in the nature of created being as such that necessarily implies an inception or a beginning (*principium durationis*) such being could have coexisted with God continuously, no ontological interval having come between God and His created effect. There is no intrinsic

¹⁸ *Principium* is an analogical term; it can have as many different realizations as there are different kinds of sources, starting points, or "firsts."

impossibility involved in the conception of a creature, or a created order, having existed from all eternity, as it were, alongside of God.

The question, whether this conclusion can apply to all possible creatures, we shall have to consider later at some length; for there exists an important argument, that no being having a successive duration could have existed from eternity. As for spiritual things, things unchangeable in their substantial being, it seems unquestionable that they could exist from eternity. Indeed, their very substantial unchangeableness may appear to support the hypothesis that they *must* have existed from eternity.

Now in the doctrine of St. Thomas the duration of angels is aeviternal, and aeviternity participates in the divine eternity itself, inasmuch as it too enjoys a certain simultaneous wholeness.¹⁹ This matter is clearly germane to our study. It even demands consideration, for were it shown that aeviternity *necessitated* existence from eternity, the entire doctrine of creation as a free act would collapse.

The duration of created being as such is measurable either by time or by aeviternity; God's duration, one with Himself, alone is measured by eternity. Only God's duration is altogether immutable. But the duration of aeviternity, while intransmutable²⁰ in respect of substantial being, is transmutable as regards the accidental being of immanent and transient action, of *affectiones*, and local change. Thus, the duration of spiritual creatures is simultaneously whole with respect to substantial being. Yet such beings are not eternal in the strict sense, because motion, change, and hence time, are necessarily involved in the manifestation of their potencies or powers. In a word, while spiritual substances participate in the intransmutability of eternal duration, they also of necessity share in the changeableness of temporal duration; whereas the divine

¹⁹ E. g., cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 10, a. 5; *Quodl.*, X, q. 2, a. 4.

²⁰ *Intransmutable* is the word St. Thomas uses (cf. *Summa Theol.*, *loc. cit.*), and it conveys the sense intended more precisely than "unchangeable," "immobile," or even "immutable."

eternity is absolutely incompatible with mutability in any mode.²¹ The aeviternal is indeed infinite in duration, inasmuch as it is not limited, not bounded by time. Since all things aeviternal were brought into being by the act of God's free will, none of them need have existed always. Nevertheless, nothing in the nature of the aeviternal would have prevented it from so existing. Nor is it absolutely necessary that the aeviternal should exist in an infinite or endless duration *a parte post*. Though the substantial being of an aeviternal creature is intransmutable, its existence, like that of every creature, is contingent absolutely upon the will of the Creator; it is within God's power, of course, to withdraw His creative and conservative causality from any creature: the substantial *esse* of the spiritual substance is annihilable, but not transmutable by any power.²²

It may be useful to sum up the chief points that have been made. According to the Christian revelation, no aeviternal being did in fact exist always, or, in the usual formula, "from eternity." Yet in the very essence of such a being there is found no necessary reason why it should not have so existed. The total absence of this kind of necessity is a mark of substantially unchangeable created being as such. It is possible, by absolute intrinsic possibility as well as by the active possibility of God's creative power, that some being or order of beings essentially other than God should have existed always. The possibility of a temporal or durational beginninglessness, in the sense previously explained, necessarily entails the absolute possibility consisting in the intrinsic, essential compatibility of existence-from-another with existence-always. Stated in logical terms, the concept of caused being does not include the concept of beginning *de novo*. The former, however, does include the

²¹ *Ibid.*, and ad 2.

²² In the doctrine of St. Thomas, aeviternal duration illustrates the principle that God's creative power is not limited to the production of that which is in every way finite—though all creatures are finite in their being—, but extends to the production of beings infinite *secundum quid*, i. e., relatively or in certain modes. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 7, a. 2.

concept of origination—to be an effect is to originate from a cause—, but not of the mode of that origination. This brings us to a point which, though contained implicitly in what has been said already, may have been missed, or grasped only obscurely.

It is because the act of creation is an absolute origination that its effect can have existed always. No thing having originated via motion of any kind can have existed always, because a thing produced through motion exists in the beginning of that motion before it exists in the end thereof. A cause that produces its effect by moving must precede the latter in time.²³ On the other hand, an effect proceeding from the act of creation need never have not been. I use the indefinite article “an,” because it is a debated question whether some kinds of effects could have existed from eternity. This problem will be considered later. A world that never began to exist, but always was, necessarily would have been made to be by that instantaneous, non-mutational, origination which is God’s creative act.²⁴ Whether or not a world of change and time could have existed always, it clearly could not have originated from any transmutative cause or causes.

2. TIME AND SOME PROOFS OF THE WORLD’S ETERNITY

There exist some weighty considerations respecting the nature of duration, of time, and especially of the *now* of time, that seem to offer reasonable grounds for the doctrine of the demonstrability of the “eternity” of the world.²⁵ The theories and arguments analyzed below are all, I believe, based directly or indirectly upon Aristotle. The problems in ideogenesis that they raise, being not immediately relevant to our purpose, we

²³ On the other hand, that which proceeds from another without motion is simultaneous in duration with that from which it proceeds. Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 13.

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, and see *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 46, a. 2, ad 1, with II *C. Gent.*, cap. 17, for detailed proofs that creation is not a motion or a mutation.

²⁵ Cf. particularly the following: *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 17, Objections and replies; II *C. Gent.*, cap. 32 ff.; *Summa Theol.*, *loc. cit.*, aa. 1, 2; II *Sent.*, dist. I, q. 1, a. 5; dist. II, q. 1, a. 3.

pass over, limiting our attention to their purely speculative content.

First, I should like to underscore the following argument, because it evokes from St. Thomas a response hinging upon a particularly significant distinction. The argument is substantially this: Whatever is prior to time is eternal. Now the world existed before time properly so called, since it was created in the first instant of time, which was itself not yet actually time, but its principle.²⁶ This objection against the possibility of a non-eternal world is not without force. Does not time necessarily imply a *before* and an *after*? We shall observe other arguments in which the essence of this one is incorporated.

St. Thomas replies, as he frequently does, by first analyzing the meaning of a key word or phrase.²⁷ "To be before time," he says, has two senses. In one sense it means to precede all time and everything partaking of time, while in another it signifies priority to completed time, to time in the full sense, time as time. If priority to time be taken in the first sense, St. Thomas explains, it cannot be said that the world existed before time; for, although the instant in which the world (as we know by Revelation) began is not time in its complete or achieved being, that instant nevertheless is "something of time" (*aliquid temporis*); not, indeed, a part of time, it is time's initial point, its terminus *a quo*.

According to the second meaning of the phrase "to be before time," it is true to say that the world existed before time, because time is realized and exists simply as time only in the instant that is preceded by another instant. Although nothing of time exists actually except the *now*, succession is of its very essence. In a word, time as such entails a *before* and an *after*. Thus, time as such entails a *before* and an *after*. Thus, it is divisible, whereas the instant is indivisible.²⁸ That is why St. Thomas,²⁹ while granting that time can begin only with

²⁶ Cf. *De Pot.*, loc. cit., obj. 5.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ad 5.

²⁸ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, loc. cit., a. 3, obj. 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, ad 3.

respect to a *now*, denies that there is time as such in the first *now* inaugurating time; rather, it is from this *now* that time itself begins.

Let no one fail to appreciate the plausibility of the objection St. Thomas is answering. It is based on a twofold truth respecting time: that nothing of time exists in act except the *now*,⁸⁰ and that time is essentially successive. Observe how the objection develops from this ground. The past no longer is, and the future is not yet. The past really was, and the future really will be. And the total reality of the present includes both; for the present not only is heir to the past, but also is big with possibilities of future fruition. Nevertheless, the past has its point of contact with actual being, solely in the present. And the future only potentially is; it achieves actuality by itself perishing in the *now*. But the *now* of time, as contrasted with the immutable *now* of eternity, is always flowing. Does not that which flows, flow from one thing into another thing? Must not every *now* proceed from a prior *now* to a posterior *now*? Is not this what everybody understands by the *now* of time? If so, there could have been no first *now*, nor could there ever be a last one. Aristotle was right. The world is necessarily eternal, both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*.⁸¹

In this simple formulation we have perhaps one of the most effective introductions to the doctrine of creation as the necessary absolute Source (*principium originis*) of all being as being. I trust it is clear that the argument confronting us is really answerable only in virtue of that doctrine.

If time had not been created, could it have existed always? In any case, time must have originated via creation. On the supposition that time always existed, every *now* would have been preceded by another *now*. But on the supposition that time began, this conclusion, of course, would not follow. This last supposition, however, is possible only on the ground of the doctrine of creation. Had time not been created, no absolutely primary *now* could have existed. For, if time was not created,

⁸⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, a. 1, obj. 7.

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⁸¹ Cf. *De Pot.*, *loc cit.*, obj. 16.

it was generated. But generation is itself a movement, a temporal process; indeed, motion is materially time. A motion can produce motion, and hence time. Yet the first instant of time, we have seen, is not time, but its beginning. This beginning was not a motion. And that which is not motion could not have been produced by a motion. The effect of every act of natural generation is measured by time, is in time, presupposes time, and thus has a *before* and an *after*. The now of time cannot be conceived except as flowing. But thanks to the instantaneous, non-temporal character of the act of creation, it is possible to conceive of a *now* that flowed into another, and not from another, *now*; and this is the *now* whence time began.³²

Aristotle had argued³³ that since time cannot exist and is inconceivable apart from the instant *now*, and the *now* is a middle-point uniting in itself both a beginning and an end (a beginning of future time and an end of past time), it follows that there must always be time. And if this is true of time, it must also be true of motion, of which time is the number. If no part of time can exist except the *now*, and if the *now* is always the end of the past and the beginning of the future, then time obviously can neither cease nor begin, and consequently neither can motion. Let us consider St. Thomas' detailed treatment of this argument.³⁴

First, he sets forth the classical analogy: the *now* is to time as the point to the line. It does not pertain to the nature of the point to be a mean or a medium; on the contrary, there exists one point that is the line's beginning and not a part of the line, and another point that is a termination only. If a line were infinite, or endless, in both directions, then indeed every point would be at once a beginning and an end. Thus, it cannot be demonstrated that a line is infinite, on the ground that every

³² "Time" is understood materially here (i. e., in respect of its subject, which is reality moving), and elsewhere, unless otherwise indicated.

³³ VIII *Physic.*, cap. 1; 251b 19-27.

³⁴ This whole matter is dealt with fully by St. Thomas in his Commentary on VIII *Physic.*, lect. 2.

point is a beginning and an end. Quite the reverse: given an infinite line, it could be proved that every point was at once a beginning and an end. Apply these considerations to time, and it will be seen that the *now* can be said to be always in its beginning and always in its end, only on the supposition that time itself is infinite, termless, or eternal. Therefore Aristotle's argumentation is circular; it assumes precisely that which is to be proved. It cannot be admitted that every *now* is at once a beginning and an end of time, unless it be granted that motion is eternal. If we hold that motion did not always exist, but that there was an original indivisible *momentum* before which no motion whatever existed, then at the same time we will have affirmed the existence of a primordial *now* prior to which there was no time whatever. In this case, Aristotle's insistence that *before* and *after* cannot exist apart from time will be of no avail. We say that "before" the beginning of time, no time exists. But this "before" signifies ontological priority only. We are not falling into the naïve self-contradiction of asserting a time before time's inception. Prior to the first *now*, inaugurating time, no time exists in reality, but only in the imagination. When we say that outside of the world, there is nothing except God, we are not positing a space or a dimension beyond the world. Neither are we implying that some kind of successive duration or time existed before the world, when we say that prior to the world nothing was.

Motion, and in consequence time, whether they be supposed eternal or not, necessarily had an absolute originative *principium*. St. Thomas' distinction between *principium originis* and *principium durationis* is indispensable for the correct understanding of a number of his statements and arguments concerning the beginning and the end of motion, time, etc. For he frequently uses *principium* simply to designate an initial point of a segment of motion or of time in the motion-time continuum. Thus, taking *principium* in this sense, it is true to say that every instant *now* is both the *principium* and the *finis* of time, since every moment in motion is a beginning and an end of

motion.³⁵ Where motion and time exist from eternity, there is of course no problem of an absolute first. Motion in such a world would be completed motion and time always completed time. As Aristotle showed,³⁶ motion cannot have originated by a "becoming," because a becoming of motion would entail the existence of a process of change prior to the first; and likewise a perishing of motion would involve the existence of a process of change subsequent to the (hypothetical) last one.³⁷ Now, *before* and *after* belong to time according as they are found in motion, so that beginning and end in time are to be considered in the same way as in motion.³⁸ Thus, granted the eternity of motion and time, any given moment in motion or in time must be at once a beginning and an end. If motion begins,³⁹ however, the first *momentum* will be a beginning only. The Aristotelian view of the instant *now*, as being always the beginning and the end of time, presupposes the eternity of time and motion. As St. Thomas points out,⁴⁰ Aristotle brought up his argument on this head against those who contradicted themselves by asserting the eternity of time while denying the eternity of motion. Indeed, St. Thomas had penetratingly observed⁴¹ that Aristotle's arguments for the eternity of the world are not absolutely demonstrative, but only relatively, namely, as against the arguments of some of the ancient philosophers who held that the world began in various impossible ways. Nor, St. Thomas thinks, did Aristotle himself consider his own arguments on the world's eternity to be absolutely demonstrative. To enter

³⁵ Cf. *De Pot.*, loc. cit., ad 15; *Summa Theol.*, loc. cit., ad 7; Aristotle, IV, *Physic.*, cap., 11; 222b 1-8.

³⁶ VIII, *Physic.*, cap. 1; 251b 28-252a 4.

³⁷ Cf. the correlative argument proving the beginninglessness ("becominglessness") and endlessness of time. *Ibid.*, 251b 19-28.

³⁸ *Summa Theol.*, loc. cit.; cf. Aristotle, IV *Physic.*, cap. 11; 219a 17.

³⁹ *Incipere* in St. Thomas means to begin "after" (ontologically after) not having been, so that whatever "begins" is "new"—has *novitas essendi*. See, for example, *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 46, a. 2; II *C. Gent.*, cap. 32, 34, 37; II *Sent.*, dist. I, q. 1, a. 5, *ad finem*, and dist. II, q. 1, a. 3.

⁴⁰ *Summa Theol.*, loc. cit., ad 7.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, a. 1.

into this interesting matter, however, would carry us far away from our subject.

Certainly Aristotle gives considerable weight to his argument about the eternity of circular motion. He infers the world's eternity from the hypothesis of a beginningless and endless circular motion. Circular or rotatory motion, he reasons,⁴² alone can be eternal because in motion of any other kind rest must occur, and with the occurrence of rest the motion ceases; circular motion can be continuous and infinite—hence eternal in the sense of being perpetually operative, without starting-point, middle-point, or ending-point; whereas any other kind of locomotion, whether the rectilinear or a combination of the circular therewith, is necessarily discontinuous, divisible, incomplete, and in consequence perishable.

Is Aristotle's inference as to the fact of eternal motion valid? I think it is clear from the foregoing summary that the argument is entirely hypothetical. If motion is eternal—beginningless, endless, continuous—, then it is circular. Aristotle does not prove the eternity of motion from its circularity; rather, on the supposition that motion is eternal, he concludes that it is circular. Aristotle has not demonstrated that "eternal" circular motion actually exists. Nor could he have done so, because in the very nature of the case it cannot be done. Nothing concerning actual physical motion can be positively concluded from a consideration of the properties of mathematical objects.⁴³ From the fact that a circle (which exists intelligibly only in its geometrical definition) is an abstract continuum, without either starting-point, middle-point, or end, it by no means follows that eternal—beginningless and endless (circular)—motion actually is.

To have shown the inconclusiveness of the Aristotelian arguments from time and motion for the world's eternity is not to have eliminated the possibility of establishing that thesis. Demonstrations on other grounds have been proposed. The

⁴² Cf. VIII *Physic.*, cap. 8-9.

⁴³ *Ex mathematicis non potest aliquid efficaciter de motu concludi. De Pot.*, III, 17, ad 17.

following Avicennian line of argument commands the attention of all who would understand the relation of God the Creator to His effect. For to misconceive the nature of God's priority to the world is to fall into a dialectical trap from which there is no more possibility of escape than from the time and motion arguments previously considered, once the assumptions on which they are based have been granted. Consider, then, this proof of the world's eternity.⁴⁴

God precedes the world either in nature only, or also in duration. There is no third possibility. Now a cause in act is simultaneous with its effect. Therefore, if God is only ontologically prior to the world, and moreover, as everyone admits, existed from eternity, does it not follow that creatures also will have existed from eternity? Put positively and summarily: Creation is God's action; whatever is "in" God, is God; hence God's action is Himself. But God is eternal; therefore His action is eternal; the effect of His action—the world—, then, is likewise eternal.⁴⁵

Take now the other side of the disjunction: God precedes the world in duration as well as in nature. That prior duration, then, is related to the world's duration as a *before* to an *after*. Thus time existed before the world, and if so, then motion and the movable also.

Wherein, according to St. Thomas, does the fallacy in that argument lie? It lies first of all in the failure to distinguish between the duration of time and that of eternity. God precedes the world not only in nature, but also in duration—not indeed in the duration of time, but in the immutable, simultaneously whole, "duration" of eternity. It is obviously necessary always to bear in mind the fact that "before" the world no real time could have existed. Not only is it possible for us to imagine a "time" before the world, stretching back to infinity, we do so almost spontaneously, because all our mental activity is rooted in our sense cognitions of spatio-temporal things. Now the

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, obj. 20, ad 20; *Summa Theol.*, *loc cit.*, objs. 6, 8, 10, and replies thereto.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, obj. 10.

important point to remember is this: such a "time" cannot be conceived, because it could not be; and it could not be because it is self-contradictory: a "time" before the world would be a time before time.

The second part of the argument—that God being eternal His effect also is eternal—is answered in terms of the principle that God is an intelligent agent acting by free will. An effect proceeding from intellect and will follows the determination of the intellect and the command of the will. The intellect predetermines, prescribes, preordains the time when the effect is to be produced or the thing made. Creation is God's art, His making; and art not only determines this or that to be such, but also to be at a given time. If, as with God, an act of will suffices to produce an effect, the latter will follow at the time predetermined by the intellect. Any intellectual agent, of course, can will now to do something later. God wills what He wills from all eternity. It is indeed possible absolutely speaking, but not at all necessary, that some effect or effects of His will should exist from eternity.⁴⁶ But since in intellectual agents (which act by free choice) the principle of action is what is conceived and preordained by them, it is evident that from God's eternal action no eternal effect need ensue. The effect can have any duration, consonant with its nature, that God freely chooses to give it.⁴⁷

3. CAN MOBILE OR SUCCESSIVE BEING HAVE EXISTED FROM ETERNITY?

Permanent things must exist integrally at their inception; if they begin, they must be wholly when they begin.⁴⁸ If the being of time is conceived after the fashion of such beings, then it

⁴⁶ Cf. II C. Gent., cap. 35.

⁴⁷ *Praefixio mensurae temporis dependet ex simplici voluntate Dei, qui voluit [as we know from revelation only] quod mundus non esset semper, sed quandoque esse inciperet.* De Pot., q. 3, a. 17. Cf. *Summa Theol.*, loc. cit., ad 10.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 66, 4, and 5: *Quia locus est de permanentibus, concreaturs est totus simul. Tempus autem, quod est non permanens, concreaturs est in suo principio; etiam modo nihil est accipere in actu de tempore. nisi nunc.*

will be argued that time cannot begin, inasmuch as it is of its essence always to be complete, always to have a *before* and an *after*. This conception underlies all the Aristotelian arguments for the eternity of time. But no such argument can be demonstrative. The being of time is not to be conceived on the analogy, so to speak, of that of permanent things whose being is simultaneously whole, and which therefore must exist wholly whenever they exist. Remove the false comparison and it will be seen that time need not exist in its complete actuality at its inception: "Time need not exist wholly when it begins; thus nothing prevents our saying that time begins to exist in an instant."⁴⁹ Indeed, time could not exist integrally in its beginning: "It cannot be made to be except with respect to some *now*; not because there is time in the first *now* itself, but because from it time begins."⁵⁰

Time itself was and is created, or rather concreated. To be made by creation does not imply a *before* and an *after*, because creation is neither motion nor the term of motion.⁵¹ Nothing of time exists actually except the instant *now*. But nothing is made in any way except according to the mode wherein it exists. Therefore, as St. Thomas has just said, time cannot be made except according to some *now*. Had time existed from eternity, then, it necessarily would have been created permanently according to "some now." Can anything impermanent in its being—and surely nothing is more fleeting than motion and time—have been created permanently? "Since time is not permanent," St. Thomas says, "it was in fact concreated only in its beginning; just as even at the present moment we cannot lay hold of any part of time except the *now*."⁵² Could time have been concreated always?

⁴⁹ *Non oportet quod totum tempus sit quando incipit esse; et sic nihil prohibet dicere quod tempus incipit in instanti esse. De Pot., loc. cit., ad 25.*

⁵⁰ *Non potest fieri [tempus] nisi secundum aliquod nunc; non quia in ipso primo nunc sit tempus, sed quia ab eo incipit tempus. Summa Theol., I, q. 46, a. 3, ad 3.*

⁵¹ *Cf. ibid., ad 2.*

⁵² *Tempus autem, quod est non permanens, concreatum est in suo principio; etiam modo nihil est accipere in actu de tempore, nisi nunc. See above, note 48.*

Allow me to review John of St. Thomas' treatment of the problem.⁵³ To his mind this matter presents a special difficulty. Obviously no beginning could be assigned to that which exists successively from eternity; no infinite or termless duration could be included between any hypothetical beginning and the present moment. But to exist from eternity is to have a duration endless *a parte ante*. On the other hand, we cannot really conceive of a beginningless motion or time; an infinite succession existing from eternity, John of St. Thomas believes, is unintelligible. For it is of the essence of succession, he argues,⁵⁴ that one part cease and another begin. Now to suppose that a part which ceases, or a moment that ends, had endured throughout an infinite time, is to contradict oneself. On that hypothesis, no part could cease, nothing could pass; in a word, no succession whatever could take place. It is because motion is successive that it is necessarily finite, necessarily embraced within terms. If successive duration exists, it must be finite. If it is finite, it cannot be "from eternity."

John of St. Thomas signalizes two opinions on this subject. The first one (shared, for example, by Dominic Soto, the Conimbricenses, Suarez) is that no motion, substantial generations included, could have existed from eternity. Some advocates of this general view, however, adopt the circular motion theory, thinking it possible that the continuity of such motion makes its beginninglessness at least conceivable. The other opinion (held by Capreolus, Sylvester of Ferrara, Scotus, the Salmanticenses) is that every kind of motion and generation could have existed from eternity, and thus have endured through an infinite time. John of St. Thomas does not attribute either of these opinions to St. Thomas himself, though he thinks that the first opinion is not only more probable, but also more certain.⁵⁵ He attempts to show, moreover, that it is in harmony with the principles and essential thought of St. Thomas, whereas the second view is not.

⁵³ *Phil. Nat.*, I, q. 24, a. 2, in *Cursus Philosophicus*, ed. Reiser, II, 480-84.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 480b 40-481a 27. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 481b 8.

John's espousal of the first opinion rests on the ground that corruption from eternity is impossible. Now there can be no succession, he says, without corruption.⁵⁶ Aristotle and St. Thomas have shown that nothing can be produced through motion from eternity. If indeed a cause produces its effect instantaneously, that cause need not precede its effect in duration or time. But causes that operate through motion, must, of course, be temporally prior to their effects; the beginning or starting-point of the process obviously antedates its end.⁵⁷ But if it is incongruous that an effect be caused by motion or change from eternity, it will also be incongruous, John concludes, for anything changed or moved (*mutatum*) to have existed from eternity; for such a thing is a term of motion. Consequently, for motion itself to have existed from eternity would be incongruous.⁵⁸

This judgment, John states, results from a two-fold consideration, which St. Thomas always thought exceedingly difficult, and which he left unsolved.⁵⁹ The first consideration, as John had pointed out, concerns the nature of motion: motion is successive and consists of transitive parts, of which the one ends and the other begins. If motion did not begin, it could endure in neither an infinite nor a finite time. Not in an infinite time because (as John had previously argued) then there could be no succession, but permanence only, and consequently no motion at all. Nor again, in a finite time, for a beginningless

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 481b 11.

⁵⁷ Cf. St. Thomas' *Opusculum XXVII, De aeternitate mundi, in med.*

⁵⁸ John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 481b 11-25.

⁵⁹ *Fundamentum huius sententiae sumitur ex duplici ratione, quam D. Thomas semper difficillimam reputavit et insolutam reliquit. Ibid.*, p. 481b 26. To my knowledge, St. Thomas always speaks of the matter in question with extreme caution. He certainly affirms that a world could have always existed, and there is no reason to suppose that he did not have in mind an "eternal" world of time and motion such as Aristotle conceived of. But St. Thomas does not attempt to demonstrate how it is not impossible that such a world could have existed always. Why this negative attitude? In my opinion, because St. Thomas considered that specific problem insusceptible of demonstrative treatment. In later pages I shall try to make clear the grounds of this opinion, showing wherein and why the solution of John of St. Thomas appears to me indemonstrative.

motion is precisely an infinite or termless one. A finite time is one that begins and ends. Beyond any given finite duration, therefore, there would remain another part or segment of motion, likewise finite. Thus the entire motion would be finite from eternity; which is contradictory.

The situation is not the same, John is careful to point out, in regard to motion *a parte post*. Eternal, that is, ceaseless or perpetual, motion in the future is conceivable. Finite parts of motion could be traversed endlessly. Motion in this sense would be called infinite syncategorematically, and thus potentially. On the contrary, a permanent thing, if it endures eternally *a parte post*, does so in one single infinite duration, because it endures permanently and not successively. It is for this reason that a permanent, as contrasted with a successive, thing could have been created from eternity.⁶⁰ St. Thomas himself, according to John, touches upon (*tetigit*) this argument.⁶¹ Concerning the opinion that if the world had existed from eternity, an infinity of days would have passed, St. Thomas points out⁶² that any part of the past can be traversed, because it was finite; but had the world always existed, no first day or first time could be attributed to it, and consequently no transition, for transition always requires two terms. Observe, John says, how St. Thomas is admitting that an infinity of days (or circulations of the sun), taken collectively, cannot be traversed; and that, since on that hypothesis no first day is assignable, it follows that transition could not be attributed to such a world. But motion is transition. Therefore, John concludes, motion existing from eternity is impossible. Is this argument valid?

It is true that every transition is between two terms. Now, if the world had always existed, there would be no first, and for that reason, no transition.⁶³ This does not mean that motion

⁶⁰ John of St. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 481b 26-482a 30.

⁶¹ In II C. Gent., cap. 38, and in *Summa Theol.*, I, q. 43, q. 2, ad6.

⁶² *Quodlibet circulatio praecedentium transiri potuit, quia finita fuit; in omnibus autem temporibus, si mundus semper fuisset, non esset accipere primam, et ita nec transi-*
m, qui semper exigit duo extrema. II C. Gent., loc. cit.: "Quoad etiam tertio.

loc cit., a. 2; II C. Gent., loc. cit.

could not have existed from eternity, but that motion would always be finite actually. Even on the hypothesis of an eternal world, the infinite could not have been actually traversed. All we could say is that the eternal world would have traversed throughout an infinite or endless duration an infinity of finite temporal intervals. In this hypothesis there is no contradiction whatever.⁶⁴ As Father Sertillanges points out,⁶⁵ the notion of traversing the past can be understood only in two ways: either as a transition from any point at all in the past to the present, or as a retrogression from the present into the past. In the first case, one is confronted with a finite distance, which therefore can be traversed, however great its extent may be conceived to be. In the second case, we have an untraversable infinity, in the conception of which, however, there is no intrinsic difficulty. The reason for the apparent antinomies involved lies in the fact that the absence of any starting-point confronts us with the infinity or termlessness of the past, on the one hand, while on the other, the initial point taken in the present will always, however many successive additions be made, prevent us from ever attaining the infinite—a self-contradictory undertaking indeed.⁶⁶

To sum up, according to John of St. Thomas, every part of an eternal, beginningless, motion would have been preceded by another part, so that to choose one part of the motion which would have coincided with creation, in order to attribute to it

⁶⁴ Cf. D. Nys, *La notion de temps* (Louvain, 1913), p. 153.

⁶⁵ In his article, "La preuve de l'existence de Dieu et l'éternité du monde," *Revue thomiste* (1897), p. 619.

⁶⁶ Cf. Nys, *op. cit.*, p. 153. The essentially negative character of St. Thomas' position regarding the demonstrability of an eternal world should be kept in mind. His position is that reason cannot demonstrate that creation had a *principium durationis*, that the world had a beginning: *mundum incepisse est credibile, non autem demonstrabile, vel scibile. Summa Theol., loc. cit.* It does not seem true to say, however, that St. Thomas' thesis is "purely negative" (*purement négative*) and that St. Thomas makes no claim to be able to demonstrate the possibility of an eternal creation. (Nys, *op. cit.*, p. 134). St. Thomas has shown that the arguments known to him against the possibility of an eternal world are indemonstrative; but, as we have observed, he has shown also that some created order could have existed always.

an existence either finite or infinite, is to affirm either that movement has begun in time or that the initial point of the movement had been subject to change throughout an eternity. On either hypothesis, motion cannot have been beginningless. The supposition of a motion *ab aeterno* is thus self-refuting.

Against this theory, however, it must be said that there is no intrinsic contradiction in the concept of a beginningless motion. Indeed, there would be no determinate part of such motion that was not successive, temporal, and finite. But the very concept of "eternal motion" excludes the possibility of 'choosing a part of motion that would have coincided with creation,' that is to say, a First. Now, a successive infinity, an endless progression or recession, is not an actual infinity. The purely potential infinity of an eternal, termless, successive duration John of St. Thomas has transformed into an actual one. This, I think, is the prime root of all his argumentation against the possibility of "successives" having existed from eternity. There exist much older, and no less subtle and intricate dialectics, to the same end.

For example, in St. Bonaventure, among several other arguments against the possibility of an eternal world, we find the following, which I give in abridged form.⁶⁷ If, in the limitless past of an "eternal" world, there was no day which preceded eternally the present day, then one is admitting that all temporal intervals or distances are finite, and consequently that the world did in fact have a beginning. On the other hand, if such a hypothetical "day" be granted, then it alone is eternal, and so again the series of times of which that "day" is the first, is actually finite.

This argument is reduced to the question: Is the first term of the time-series finite or infinite? ⁶⁸ The question itself betrays a failure to apprehend the very meaning of an eternal or infinite successive duration. For it is of the essence of such a duration not to have a first term at all. In a multitude of past days,

⁶⁷ *Sententiarum*, Lib. II, p. 1, a. 1, q. 2; *Opera Omnia*, Quarrachi ed. (1885), II, p. 21, n. 2-3.

⁶⁸ Cf. Nys, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

hypothetically limitless, it is illusory to seek a "first": an undertaking intrinsically impossible, because self-contradictory. Having disposed of this impossible hypothesis of a "first" day in an eternal duration, what remains? Each and every part or segment of the limitless time or motion series then is seen to be absolutely finite. Now choose in this infinite succession any term at all, no matter how remote. Being, by hypothesis, always posterior to any other term, part, point, or moment, this term will be separated from you by a finite duration or distance. Any conceivable temporal interval is finite. Is not the sum of all possible intervals therefore itself finite? No matter how many finites be added to finites, the result will always be finite. True indeed; but the very question assumes what is impossible, namely, that the parts or elements of an infinite duration are actual entities addable in such a way as to constitute an actually infinite multitude. But nothing of time or motion exists in act except the *now*. And a duration termless either *a parte ante* or *a parte post*, it should be remembered, is no actual infinity but only a potential one.⁶⁹

John of St. Thomas gives considerable weight to his argument that a beginningless creature would necessarily be immobile both with respect to its substance and its operation.⁷⁰ He contends that if a creature were produced without a beginning of duration, it was produced as permanent and was conserved throughout an infinite duration. An instantaneous, that is, immobile, operation conceivably can have been in existence from eternity. Activity involving motion, however, cannot have

⁶⁹ To the question, Would not the sum of all possible time-intervals itself be finite?, Father Nys' answer is inadmissible. He says (*op. cit.*, p. 163) that if the multitude of these finite intervals has no limits, then the totality of them is not finite but infinite, whereas if that multitude is itself limited, then it is finite as a whole. He is implicitly assuming that the individual parts of a termless duration can be taken collectively, can be conceived to constitute an actual infinite. However, Father Nys has correctly diagnosed the error in St. Bonaventure's argument, namely, that it is valid only on the supposition that the time-motion series has a term—only on the supposition that an eternal or infinite duration cannot be: "L'argument n'a de force probante qu'à la condition de supposer un terme à la série, ou d'enlever à la multitude infinie son caractère essentiel." *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 483b 24-47.

existed from eternity, because motion requires transition, and thus corruption of the parts of the moving thing. Hence, for a thing to exist through an infinite duration, it must be immobile. Note how this line of reasoning applies to time. If time had no starting-point, it would be immobile, for to move is to proceed from a beginning. If there is no beginning, no first time, then certainly there has been no progress, no advance, from any assignable time in the past. On such a hypothesis time, in short, is only an appearance.

Is it not clear that "infinite duration" has been actualized, by being conceived, or rather imagined, as a kind of actual totality? There is advance in relation to no matter what past time one may designate; there is no advance whatever in relation to an illusory (because non-existent) starting-point; and it is of the essence of an "infinite duration," of course, to have no beginning. Advance and retrogression are purely relative terms.⁷¹ Now, looking to the future, one can argue in the same way.

Let us grant that the universe in its totality need never come to an end. So, one might insist, we are not advancing at all. For, just as to advance is to get farther and farther away from a starting-point, so is it to come ever nearer to an end. If there is no end, then there is no motion at all. That argument is easily answered. At this very moment we are coming nearer to any and every conceivable future time. We are not approaching an illusory terminus, an "endless" end—which, being a patent contradiction in terms, is a simple non-entity, like a square circle. In an infinite successive duration, there is an infinite number of beginnings and ends, or there are none at all, depending upon whether one is speaking of relative terms or absolute ones. The hypothesis of a duration, infinite *a parte ante* as well as *a parte post*, excludes absolute terms. A duration infinite *a parte post* but finite *a parte ante*, or conversely, is termless in one direction and terminated in the other. Now, in order that

⁷¹ Cf. Sertillanges, *La création* (Editions de la Revue des Jeunes: Paris, 1927), pp. 261 f.

a succession be real, terms really assignable suffice. Yesterday was and tomorrow will be. Hence, one can really advance from yesterday to tomorrow, from any yesterday to any tomorrow. On the hypothesis of a beginningless and endless duration, however, an absolute yesterday that would be the first day of the world could no more exist than the absolute tomorrow that would be the world's last day.⁷² The great caveat to heed in all this is: Beware of converting the potential infinity of an eternal successive duration into an actual one.

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⁷² *Ibid.*

BOOK REVIEWS

Rudolf Allers ou l'anti-Freud. By Louis Jugnet. Paris: Éditions du Cèdre, 1950. Pp. 176. Frs. 210.

In the eighty odd years of experimental psychology, the Aristotelian science of man has had no stouter champion to defend it on the very soil of its adversaries than Rudolf Allers. Fortified, through both his formal training and his years of practice, with a first-hand knowledge of medicine, psychology, and psychiatry, he grew to a sound ontological view of man by the same logic of fact that is alleged to turn modern scholarship away from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas.

Those privileged to sit in his classrooms know the kind of head and the kind of heart that Allers has. Even more than in written words, Allers, the professor, can claim the highest mark of a teacher—imparting an intellectual method and then inspiring his students to move forward within it. Allers has a gift of introspection for the probing of human activities. This gift has enabled him to exploit phenomenology for the rejection of misconceptions concerning man and for the description of psychological data as they are in conscious life. His wide and rapid reading have allowed his mind to range far and deep and to move in a single life-time through fields that would each normally be a life's work. Above all, unlike many others that succeed in practical pursuits like medicine or even psychiatry, Allers has the philosopher's habit for penetration and perception.

Louis Jugnet, who in 1949 gave us *Pour connaître la pensée de St. Thomas d'Aquin*, has done a distinct service to sound philosophy by a sympathetic and instructive sketch of Allers' philosophy of the normal and abnormal man. The alternate title is regrettable; it conveys the impression that the meat of Allers' contribution to philosophy is a criticism of Freud. A similar impression may linger in those who have read only *The Successful Error*. But that impression is false. Allers gives his own counter-proposals against the false psychologies of our times.

Jugnet has clarified dark corners of Allers' doctrine by means of letters, and Allers' replies are, like his books and articles, both interesting and enlightening. Allers feels that Jugnet has successfully summarized his thought, as shown by a passage from Allers' letter of January 10, 1950 and quoted in Jugnet's preface: "As far as an author is a judge of his work, it seems to me that no one could have presented my ideas more clearly nor summarized them so well in so few lines." A reviewer can only second that statement.

The book opens with a rapid review of the case against Freud so forcefully argued in *The Successful Error*. As Allers sums it up, Freudianism may be reduced to six basic principles: 1) All mental processes work in

the same mechanical way as reflex actions; 2) psychic phenomena follow a pattern of strict determinism; 3) everything mental is merely a complex of physical energies; 4) the conscious life of man is rooted only in instinct; 5) man's present behavior is the result of phylogenetic evolution; and 6) free associationism is the means of getting at the causes of mental events.

Jugnet records also other highlights of the Allers estimate of Freudianism: for instance, Freudians beg the question by psychoanalyzing the very objections made against them; they are subjectivists, and they cannot establish that the cures they claim might not be due to other causes than Freudian analysis. All these arguments are not of equal force. They are not meant to be. The basic error of Freudianism remains, as both Allers and Jugnet would admit, the reduction of spirit to matter and the view of man as merely a complex of minerals headed back to this lowly birthplace through his *Todesinstinkt*.

It is well known that Allers parts company with other critics of Freudianism who likewise claim allegiance to Aristotle. Roland Dalbiez and Mortimer Adler would reject the materialism of Freud but retain something of his analytic method within a spiritual perspective. Allers is emphatically opposed to such a compromise. According to his investigations, the method and matter of Freud cannot be dissociated, and if a psychiatry is to be psychoanalytic, then it must operate within a Freudian atmosphere of evolutionism, mental "topology," and determinism.

To resolve this conflict would require a study of what and where the unconscious is, if it is at all in the make-up of man, and such a study has been retarded in the twentieth century by the failure of Thomists to analyze more closely the rich texts of St. Thomas on the exterior and especially the interior senses. For instance, *In I Metaphy. Arist., 1*, St. Thomas compares memory and animal "prudence" in a manner that, studied more fully, might discover the connection between memory's thesaurus of latent impressions and those value judgments which are instrumentally made through the cogitative power.

The Thomistic notion of habitus gives promise also as a way of finding whether there are stored "impressions" midway between act and potency and hence, because not completely potential, able in some way to influence conscious life. Whatever and wherever the storehouse of latent impressions may be and however it may exert a virtual influence in conscious life, it will certainly not be found to be the unconscious in the Freudian and deterministic sense of that word. But it may still, for all that, yield to analysis of a highly qualified sort. The fact that the analysis of man must be qualified is of crucial importance, and it is a merit of Allers to have shown, with incisive logic, that "elementalism" is a false psychology of man.

The final two sections in Jugnet's book outline the positive doctrine of

Allers in the field of psychiatry. Allers has forcefully shown that if the dividing line between the normal and the abnormal in somatic medicine is difficult to draw, the problems are even more acute when we come to define the abnormal mind. Neurosis, Allers holds, is not necessarily a malady in the sense of a suffering, and if, for the practitioner of somatic medicine, every case of a disease is different, the uniqueness of every person is even a greater factor in psychotherapy.

Whereas Freud simplifies all neuroses into a physical common denominator, Allers would hold that man's mental disorders are radically "metaphysical." In a letter quoted by Jugnet, Allers re-affirms this stand but insists further that the "metaphysical" difficulties of men always have their echoes in the moral order.

What Allers means by stressing the "metaphysical" roots of neuroses is simply this: Every man has a station in life, a certain vocation in the wide meaning of that word, a work to do, a niche that his talents challenge him to fill. Mental disorders spring up when men try to be too much or too little, to do more than their talents allow or less than their calling commands.

In this adjustment to life, the supreme task is to find and to follow what God wills for us as unique persons. Forsaking God leads very obviously to maladjustment, but there is also danger in the other extreme of trying to serve God not according to our own and possibly modest capacities but in an over-heroic and quasi-angelic fashion. The janitor, for example, may not have the same mental capacities as the executive, and so normalcy for the janitor consists in recognizing whatever limits he may have and adjusting his life accordingly. In this connection Allers recalls a patient morbid at the destruction of house and home; the proper psychotherapy was to advise the patient to recognize reality as it is and meet it with the tools at hand: Do not weep over the loss of the mansion, take the stones and build a more modest home!

Normalcy consists in taking an inventory of our abilities and then pursuing a life's pattern that seeks no more nor no less than they require. Such a pattern brings fulfillment to the individual as God endowed him to be fulfilled, and doing what God wills for us, personally, is the road to psychological as well as moral success. Allers concludes that the most normal man is the saint, and that the therapy of the abnormal personality is to lead the patient to see and to seek its own level of attainment in the economy of creation.

There are, Allers holds, other and less ultimate relationships than that of creature to Creator, and these may get out of line to bring on mild or serious neuroses. There are, for instance, marital or other social attitudes that may not be adjusted to realities as they are and are not in accordance with one's station. Yet these social attitudes, whether they be inferiority-

or superiority-complexes or still something else, are cases again of missing what God wants us to do or be. Here again, the most normal man is the saint. For the relation of creature to Creator is the basic value in human life, and all neuroses can be traced back to the failure to discover this relation and to behave accordingly.

This is a challenging thesis, and Jugnet sums it up in a challenging way. Scholars will be glad to have all of this dialectic of Allers gathered together in one book. Yet Jugnet's achievement is of more than academic interest, and it is to be warmly hoped that his book will soon find its way into a competent English translation.

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The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. Edited by A. A. LUCE and T. E. JESSOP. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd.

Vol. I. *Philosophical Commentaries. Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision, Theory of Vision Vindicated.* Edited by A. A. Luce. 1948. Pp. 287.

Vol. II. *The Principles of Human Knowledge, First Draft of Introduction to the Principles, Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous, Philosophical Correspondence with Johnson.* Edited by T. E. Jessop. 1949. Pp. 302. 30/.

Vol. III. *Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher.* Edited by T. E. Jessop. 1950. Pp. 343. 30/.

Vol. IV. *De Motu* (with English translation), *The Analyst, A Defence of Free-Thinking in Mathematics, Reasons for not replying to Mr. Walton's "Full Answer," Arithmetica and Miscellanea Mathematica, Of Infinites, Letters on Vesuvius, on Petrifications, and on Earthquakes; Description of the Cave of Dunmore.* Edited by A. A. Luce. 1951. Pp. 273. 30/.

The Life of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. A. A. LUCE. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1949. Pp. 272 with index. 25/.

With the approach of the bi-centenary of George Berkeley's death (1753) there is likely to be renewed interest on both sides of the Atlantic in the famous Anglican Bishop of Cloyne, whose life combined astonishing proportions of far-sighted and high-minded action with unusual philosophical and literary abilities. For these reasons, the volumes noticed here are opportune and deserve recognition not only by the professionally concerned

few but also by a wider circle of readers who will find Berkeley the man more intriguing than his excursions into philosophy and science.

For these last mentioned, the Reverend A. A. Luce's *The Life of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, is bound to prove attractive. They may know the work of J. Stock (*Life of George Berkeley*, 1784) and A. C. Fraser (*Life and Letters of George Berkeley*, 1871) and appreciate B. Rand's *Berkeley and Percival* (1914), the later studies of Hone and Rossi (*Bishop Berkeley: His Life, Writings, and Philosophy*, 1923) and John Wild's *George Berkeley* (1936); they should be happy to greet Dr. Luce's version. From the first he resolved to keep the biographical element uppermost, and he has succeeded as well as anyone could who has to deal with a man like George Berkeley, whose life was so intermingled with his philosophical, religious and scientific interests. Dr. Luce has produced a book which I should hesitate to call a definitive study but which, with all his adulation of Berkeley, qualifies as the best "life" to date.

The author is acquainted, of course, with previous studies of Berkeley, and he uses them with due tribute and critical appreciation. But his account is no mere retelling of an old story. Among the new material he turned up are over forty of Berkeley's letters. This alone would make his work significant. But there is the added factor of his situation as a Senior Fellow in Trinity College, Dublin. For years he lived where Berkeley lived and taught where he taught, and he has visited the scenes of the Bishop's labors in the New World. Dr. Luce makes no secret of his admiration for Berkeley, and while this leads to creating something of a nimbus, a biography without enthusiasm for its subject is likely to be bland and mediocre—attributes not found in this book. It amounts really to a vigorous effort to replace the caricature of Berkeley with a picture of the man as he was.

Dr. Luce contends with some heat and much learning that, on the basis of first-hand knowledge, the Bishop of Cloyne emerges as a man of affairs, sane, shrewd and efficient. "There was nothing soft or namby-pamby about him, unless benevolence and charity are such. He was a strong man, a fighting man, a man of physical and moral courage, who drew his sword and faced a wolf, who stood for an hour or more looking down into the seething crater of Vesuvius in eruption. . . . He was a man of solid learning, though the very extent of his attainments has blinded some biographers to the fact. He was not a specialized college don, and he does show a certain impatience with 'bearded boys' and 'learned dust,' with barren scholarship and trifling speculations. He preferred studies with a practical bearing, but he took the term *practical* in its broad and enlightened sense, and himself guided his practice throughout life by the wisest reading of both ancients and moderns." (pp. 224-225)

This is the man Dr. Luce offers as the real Berkeley. But unfortunately popular tradition has made him an amiable fool, with every virtue under

heaven, save commonsense. And while this might be accounted for by his scepticism or alleged denial of the existence of matter, the author thinks the misconception had a more obvious origin.

It goes back, he thinks, to the fact that after Berkeley's death, in 1753, no serious memoir appeared for some fifteen years. The interval gave "Grub Street" (or that hack-work journalism for which the name stands) a long start. In consequence, the public saw the caricature of Berkeley before the portrait, and the caricature 'caught on.' How like a philosopher, men said. Even when biographers were supplied with an authentic portrait of the real man, they were not content; their public expected something different, and so they framed the portrait in legend and draped it with those foolish tales, traditionally associated with the name of Berkeley." (p. 1)

Professor Luce's criticism of the main accounts of Berkeley may not win universal approval but it is bound to be welcomed if for no other reason than that it furnishes a forthright and intelligent summary of the sources. For instance, on the *British Plutarch*, *The Life of George Berkeley* (1762) he writes: "The misspelling of the name is an index of the ignorance here displayed. The 'Life' is a slight, chatty, pretentious, and irresponsible account without any attempt at documentation. Its earlier pages in particular make Berkeley appear ridiculous—in fact, they state that he was 'ridiculous' in his younger days. Here almost certainly is the source of the general misconception of the man, *fons et origo mali*." (p. 2)

With equal candor Dr. Luce discusses the contribution of Bishop Berkeley's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Eliza Berkeley, in her Preface to her son's *Poems*. The poetry runs 178 pages while the mother's Preface along with her Postscript, Farewell Epistle, Apology, and Postscript to the poems number some 650 pages! Eliza Berkeley herself probably did not know the Bishop, but she was none the less proud of him and jealous of his memory. In spite of her old-womanish garrulity and of what she called "these undigested immethodical pages," Dr. Luce concludes: "The size of the Preface and its rambling character inevitably arouse suspicion, but it ought not to be discredited *in toto*. I began to read it with a strong prejudice against it, but I changed my views as I read on . . . on the whole I would accept what she says, especially when she makes plain, unvarnished statements where her little foibles have no scope. Her naïveté is in her favour. She was in a position to get accurate information about her father-in-law, and sufficiently well trained to convey it. When she is not sure, she says so, and sometimes she puts a blank for a doubtful name of place or person." (p. 10)

That sort of balanced criticism begets confidence in a biographer—a confidence I have in the author in spite of a curious lapse (p. 146), where he speaks of the list of "Berkeley scholars" including some of the most eminent men in America and mentions Dwight and Wheelock as Presidents of the United States!

Dr. Luce, it is true, set his course to avoid the shoals of philosophical disputation. But he cannot entirely escape Berkeley's polemic against matter and the fires of controversy it enkindled. Here perhaps the author's personal feelings for his subject do lead him into over-simplification. It is difficult to agree, for instance, that Berkeley's alleged immaterialism is so obviously refuted by an item in his will. The author writes that "Berkeley's philosophy has been so persistently maligned from his day to ours, and his denial of material substance so entirely misrepresented that certain directions in his last will and testament become of decisive importance. . . . His hostile critics say, quite wrongly, that he did not believe in the reality of sensible body; had that been so, Berkeley must have held that his own body was unreal, and that the appearance of it, sight, touch, smell, etc., would cease at once on separation from the soul or mind. But Berkeley held no such nonsense. The terms of his will with the solemnity and the crudity of utter conviction and habitual belief affirm both body and soul, and the real existence of the identical body and its sensible appearance for days after death." Berkeley's wish was that "my body, before it is buried, be kept five days above ground, or longer, even till it grow offensive by the cadaverous smell, and that during the said time it lie unwashed, undisturbed, and covered by the same bed clothes, in the same bed, the head being raised upon pillows." (pp. 221-222)

Berkeley probably did not deny the reality and existence, as he understood the terms, of material substance. On the contrary I should say he insisted that it was real and did exist—but *its reality and existence were the reality and existence of being thought*. As Dr. John J. Laky so well points out (*A Study of George Berkeley's Philosophy in the Light of the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Washington, 1950, p. 83), Berkeley reduced all objects of knowledge to "ideas" of the sense and internal feelings, such as emotions and acts of the imagination. Since we can know only what is in the mind, we cannot assert the existence of independent extramental realities. Yet without a doubt Berkeley admitted the "existence" of his own body and such commonplace objects as chairs, tables, apples and birds. But they are brought into being *in no way by material causes*, and have no dependence upon them. They rely for their existence upon the supremely spiritual and immaterial being, God, and though I may not at any given moment perceive them, other human minds may; and in the last analysis they exist always as objects of the divine mind. Thus as I understand Berkeley, all objects are essentially mind-dependent with no material support of any kind. Their *esse* is *percipi*—if I may balance a "decisive" text with a few others. (Cf. *Principles of Human Knowledge*, sections 1, 17, 20, 24)

The best advice, perhaps, for dealing with Berkeley's obfuscated thinking came from himself, when he told his friend Dr. Samuel Johnson, in 1730,

that he would like his works read in their order of publication. This seems to be also Dr. Wild's view (*Op. cit.*, p. 489): "If Berkeley's thought as a whole is to be comprehended it must be conceived as a development. Without a sense of the direction of his reflections, they dissolve into a chaos of separate 'positions.'" It seems futile, therefore, and peevish to use single texts to settle controversies, which, for better or worse, have been inherited from the outspoken and prolific Bishop.

But an important step towards getting a grasp on his thought is certainly a knowledge of his life and Dr. Luce's contribution on this score deserves high praise. It is a necessary adjunct to the immense labor which he and Professor Jessop, of University College, Hull, have undertaken in bringing out a new and complete edition of Berkeley's writings.

It is the first in the Library of British Philosophers and will undoubtedly replace Fraser's incomplete four-volume work (Oxford, 1901). When finished, it will comprise nine volumes, with a general index, and constitute a fitting memorial to the eighteenth century philosopher, writer, scientist, missionary, controversialist and churchman. It will likewise bear tribute to the well-known Berkeleian scholars who are its editors and to the publishers who are fabricating the volumes of good quality white paper, beautifully printed and substantially bound. Material that has come to light since Fraser's time is included and, contrary to his work, Professors Luce and Jessop try to give the latest of Berkeley's own revisions, citing departures from earlier editions and manuscript variants in footnotes.

There is no question about the scholarship, devotion and craftsmanship which are going into this project on the part of both editors and publishers. Still it is unlikely to produce a sudden and dramatic reevaluation of Berkeley. It will certainly make him more available and along with the valuable introductory essays and technical apparatus will facilitate an estimation of Berkeley based not on what his critics have left of him but on the literary remains he left of himself. If they lack the voice that once could be raised to "tremendous thunder," they are still more likely to give us the true Berkeley than what appears in the tortured images of historians.

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Philosophical Analysis: a Collection of Essays. Edited by MAX BLACK.
Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950. Pp. 429. \$5.00.

In both the Preface and the Introduction to this volume of essays, the editor, Mr. Max Black, stresses the fact that the contributors were not called upon to provide anything like a formal definition of "philosophical

analysis" or even argument in its defense. Instead, their assignment was to offer mere specimens of such analysis. And specimens there are to the number of no less than 17, treating somewhat exhaustingly of all sorts of random topics in the fields of ethics, logic, aesthetics, epistemology, etc.

However, despite the self-denying ordinance of the editor and the contributors, it is hard for either reviewer or reader not to keep asking, "Just what is this analysis of which so many supposedly impressive specimens are here exhibited?" Indeed, such curiosity is but whetted by the opening sentence of the Introduction, where the editor declares that "The essays which follow might provide an 'ostensive definition' of 'philosophical analysis.'" But having whetted our curiosity, Mr. Black does little to satisfy it, indeed, one gets the rather uneasy feeling that it is here the blind who are about to lead the blind.

At any rate, under the circumstances the reviewer feels justified in attempting something that may perhaps be unwise and even unfair. For since its proponents can't describe it but will only point to it, perhaps one might try to understand this strange phenomenon of philosophical analysis in terms of an alien terminology and set of ideas. Thus, is not the contemporary analyst one who considers that the business of philosophy is to analyze not being, but meaning? That is to say, he concentrates his attention not on things, but rather on linguistic and logical intentions.

Now from the point of view of, say, classical Aristotelian realism, such a program of analyzing meanings or intentions would in certain respects appear not altogether fruitless. After all, intentions are perforce intentions of something. Hence, an examination or analysis of the intention might well lead one to a better understanding of the real which is thus intended. And yet this is not the sort of result which the method produces in the hands of the analysts themselves. On the contrary, they would probably feel that before they could come to a knowledge of the real through an analysis of meanings, they would first have to analyse the meaning of "real." And more generally, it would seem as if an analysis of meanings never leads to a knowledge of things, but only to more meanings.

Besides, one cannot down the suspicion that this whole program of analyzing meanings and intentions has been adopted and followed rather uncritically. For instance, is it not necessary to distinguish between logical and linguistic intentions, i.e. between formal and instrumental signs? Also, can it be legitimately assumed that the meaning of meanings or intentions can be established quite without reference to the real which these intentions are designed to intend or formally signify? Likewise, is there not something highly questionable in the whole attempt to substitute meaning for being as the proper object of philosophical analysis?

Now to all such questions the ordinary analyst seems to pay no heed. It presumably strikes him that such concerns involve metaphysical and

epistemological presuppositions; and he wishes to proceed without presuppositions. Consequently, he appears simply to take "meanings" in the raw, or as given, and then proceeds to analyze them, in order to see just what these given meanings mean.

Thus, to pass in review a few examples from the present volume, we might first consider Mr. Frankena's careful essay on "Obligation and Ability." By means of an analysis that is almost excruciating in the pains which it takes, the author discriminates various meanings of "ought" and various meanings of "can," in order to determine whether there is any sense in which "ought" implies "can." Needless to say, the answer is that "ought" does not imply "can" *simpliciter* but only in a certain sense. Now without denying that many of Mr. Frankena's discriminations and correlations are both sound and apt, the interesting thing to this reviewer is that he apparently never gets to the question as to what obligation or what ability is. No, the assumption of the method would seem to be that any question as to what a thing is must always be bracketted in favor of the question as to what the term means. And the result is that the question of the "is" never gets raised at all.

Or again, to take another illustration—this time from the field of logic—Mr. Ryle has an essay on "'If,' 'So,' and 'Because.'" Quite legitimately, he wants to distinguish between the meanings of the respective terms; and quite acutely he does so. Nevertheless, to this reviewer at least, his distinctions often seemed more ingenious than sound, and more haphazard than systematic. And might not the reason for this be that the kind of meanings which Mr. Ryle has here chosen to analyze are logical meanings or second intentions? Nor would there seem to be any other way of making systematic and relevant distinctions between logical entities, save with reference to the different phases or aspects of the real which these logical entities are designed to disclose or represent. And yet Mr. Ryle never asks the question as to just what it is in reality that we attempt to grasp through the use of such logical devices as "if," "so" and "because."

Mr. Ayer in his essay attempts to show that a so-called descriptive language need not contain any "basic propositions" or propositions that are absolutely certain. However, in order to show this, he treats the reader to quite an analysis of the meaning of the sentence "This is green." Again, Mr. Norman Malcolm in a long and rather painfully cautious essay succeeds in presenting a very illuminating and cogent analysis of "The Verification Argument." This is the argument so often enuntiated by Lewis, Carnap and others that no empirical statement is ever certain. And the reason is that any such empirical statement would presumably have infinite "consequences" or "expected results in experience." Hence, it seems always to be possible that at some time in the future some one or more of these expected results would not occur; and should this happen,

then doubt would immediately be cast upon the original statement. However, Mr. Malcolm shows that the force of this argument is in large measure due to an ambiguity in the word "possible." Thus, one might say that it is possible that some of the expected results might not occur, meaning thereby only that the statement to this effect is not self-contradictory. But clearly, this is not to say that such a thing is possible in the sense that there is actual positive evidence in support of the statement that they will not occur.

One would think that through this skillful analysis of the meanings of possibility, Mr. Malcolm would see that he was getting at the all-important metaphysical distinction between mere logical possibility or absence of contradiction on the one hand, and real possibility and contingency on the other. And yet true to the supposed restrictions of the method of analysis, Mr. Malcolm never takes this step from meaning to being.

Moreover, there is still another interesting feature of some of these essays which, perhaps, should be mentioned. As is well known, what originally gave no little impetus to the use of this method in philosophy was the conviction that a careful analysis of meanings in language would serve to bring to light any number of bogus metaphysical entities, which could then be properly exorcised and so rendered harmless. Witness Bertrand Russell on the subject of substance. And sure enough, in this present volume there is an essay by Mr. Lazerowitz entitled "Substratum" and one by Mr. Marhenke on "Phenomenalism." Nevertheless, the significant thing is that in neither of these essays is the claim explicitly made that through an analysis of language such a thing as substance can be shown not to exist. On the contrary, the logic of both essays would seem to be something like this: They assume on other grounds than strictly analytical ones that there are no such things as substances; then, they attempt to provide an analysis of language that will serve to explain how the illusion of substance could have arisen.

This resorting to assumptions other than strictly analytical ones calls to mind two other essays in the volume which, even if they be "analytical," still do not seem to exhibit quite the same type of analysis as many of the others. Of these, the one is a very stimulating essay by Mr. Chisholm on "The Theory of Appearing." Here the procedure would scarcely seem to be the familiar one of taking certain simple terms or sentences and then analyzing their meaning. On the contrary, Chisholm seems to be asking not about meanings but about things, his specific concern being with how and whether the so-called sensory appearances of things—the diamond-shaped look of the square table, the elliptical appearance of the penny, etc.—may be said to *be*. It's true that his concern is in large measure with whether "the language of appearing" is after all to be preferred to "the sense-datum language"; and yet he makes it quite clear that the issue is not merely a linguistic but a metaphysical one.

The other essay which would seem to diverge somewhat from the other specimens of analysis is one by Mr. Feigl. It is true that his paper could hardly be said to be about beings rather than meanings. Besides, it is a confusing and, perhaps, somewhat confused discussion, so that one hesitates to characterize it too definitely. And yet, it would seem that what Feigl is concerned to do is not to analyze specific meanings, so much as to broach the much more general question as to how ultimate philosophical principles may be justified.

Moreover, in pondering the volume as a whole, one is tempted to ask whether such is not precisely the sort of thing that needs to be done with regard to philosophical analysis itself. What are its principles? Can they be justified? Is its apparent attempt to make philosophers concentrate on meanings rather than being really defensible? After all, the mere exhibition of specimens just does not suffice. Besides, one cannot suppress the feeling that if analysts continue to do little more than just analyze more and more meanings, or the same meanings over and over again, their whole movement will eventually come to have the look of a very sterile scholasticism.

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Whitehead's Theory of Experience. By EWING P. SHAHAN. New York: King's Crown Press, 1950. Pp. 150, with index. \$2.50.

Any book on Alfred North Whitehead seems infected with that author's own obscurity. Prof. Shahan's small volume on one aspect of the philosophy of organism is, for the most part, a healthy exception. Nevertheless, this recent book on Whitehead's theory of experience is intended mainly for the clientele of Whitehead and presupposes at least some rudimentary knowledge of his system of thought. Thanks to an excellent first chapter, Dr. Shahan states clearly the problem he intends to solve.

The author is of the opinion that Whitehead had two views of experience. He calls them the limited or narrow view and the broad or general view. Each corresponds to two periods in the development of Whitehead's thought, namely, to the extension analysis of nature, wherein Whitehead emphasized space and time, and the process analysis, wherein he concentrated on the becomingness of nature or his notion called "feeling." The terminology, extension and process analysis, is that of Shahan's. Had he wished he could have cited Whitehead to justify the present study. In a note in the appendix of the second edition of *Concept of Nature*, Whitehead admits that he was not too clear on some of his early theories but that his later works attempt to remove the obscurities. In the course of

his study, Dr. Shahan comes to the conclusion that Professor Whitehead was not completely successful.

Shahan designates "creativity" and "life" as the fundamental notions of the philosophy of organism. "Life" is of main interest for Shahan since it is, for all practical purposes, synonymous with experience. "Life" contains three elements. The first is self-enjoyment or what the Thomist would call the unity or self-identity of an organism. Secondly, there is creative activity which roughly corresponds to a thing's nature and its process of development. For the benefit of Thomists it might be added that "self-creative" is not a contradiction for Whitehead since creation simply means the growth of an organism according to its nature. In reading Whitehead one must resign himself to that author's annoying habit of switching generally accepted meanings of words to fit his fancy. Finally, there is aim. This is the teleological aspect of the organism. From the Thomistic view this properly belongs to creative activity. Shahan is hard pressed to concede that Whitehead is justified in giving an organism so arbitrary a faculty as that of being able to change the end intended by its nature.

Whitehead's initial position, as explained by Dr. Shahan, consists in viewing nature exclusively in itself. He concentrates entirely on what is known and gives no consideration of the knower nor the role of thought in reaching the known. He sees in nature only two things: events and objects. An event is a particular concrete happening; an object is the abstraction of the event, that is, the removal of it from its concreteness. In his later works, Whitehead shifts his terminology so that event becomes the actual occasion of experience or actual entity and object is the eternal object. These latter are really universals and the events are particulars, but it is worth noting that the particular is not a single thing but rather a conglomeration of things.

As to human experience, Whitehead limits it to what is gained in sense-perception. The observer, man in this case, is simply an event in events. He is a part of nature. As to knowledge, it is wholly objective and Whitehead accepts what one receives. He has no doubts about the reality of qualities such as color and sound nor of nature itself. Man is in nature and any dichotomy would only lead to subjectivistic errors or empiristic dilemmas. Man is not passive but active in the process of knowledge since he is acted upon by nature as well as being selective of what he considers. This latter he does through abstraction.

As to the general result of this limited view, Shahan finds Whitehead particularly weak when it is a question of explaining the intellectual role in man for his knowledge of nature. The author goes, perhaps, too far in concluding that Whitehead is not aware of the need of inference and hypotheses simply because he makes no direct mention of these in the

early works. One need but look at Whitehead's *Universal Algebra* and *Principia Mathematica* to discover that he knew considerable about the subject. Of course, Shahan is correct in censuring him for not being explicit. Whitehead never did have very clear notions on the psychological aspects of knowledge. In the second half of his book Shahan reads this information into Whitehead. Actually it is not there.

In the later works of Whitehead, Shahan discovers two shifts in thought. The philosopher of organism devises a categorical scheme which is really a series of hypotheses for his metaphysical interpretation of nature. Secondly, Whitehead introduces the notion of "feeling" which, it might be added, is elaborated to a point of being pan-psychism.

The intricacies involved in this portion of Shahan's book defy a summary treatment for a mere book review. It must be stated, however, that Shahan gives an excellent analysis and provides many valuable insights. He even gives a treatment of the nine "Categorical Obligations" which is quite a feat in itself. It is also in this section that Shahan, a friendly critic of Whitehead, is forced to admit that author's grave limitations.

On page 54 he shows clearly, by means of quotations from *Process and Reality*, how Whitehead has a tendency to contradict himself even in the same book. Later, on page 77, he gives another illustration of Whitehead's obscurity. This time it is on the question of the possibility of error. Of course, the whole book is an attempt to reconcile, inasmuch as it is possible, Whitehead's views on experience. Only once does Dr. Shahan indicate any impatience with Whitehead and it is quite mild: "In this matter, as in others in Whitehead's philosophy, there are statements which represent a curious mixture of both points of view" (p. 99). The matter being discussed is that of consciousness.

The final chapter of the book takes up difficulties still remaining from Shahan's interpretation of Whitehead's theory of experience. For those who have never read Whitehead, this last chapter of concluding remarks will probably convince them never to try. But for the Whiteheadian student it is a rich mine of information. Shahan points out clearly and conclusively the inadequacies of Whitehead's explanation of sense-perception. Likewise the clumsy theory of actual entities related to eternal objects by negative prehensions is exposed with its shortcomings and suggestions for its revision are given.

Finally, Shahan decides that Whitehead's concept of God is that He "is simply the most important aspect of the hypothesis of life" (p. 129). Although Shahan does not say so, it seems that Whitehead had hit on the immutable nature of God and His Providence. Whitehead was unable to reconcile the two. As a result, his God is dependent upon the world from certain aspects.

Whitehead contains too many sweeping generalizations to be accepted

as an accurate thinker. Often he misses the whole point of a problem and invents a solution that confounds the original difficulty. Certainly Dr. Shahan has shown something can be done with Whitehead's thought. Yet, there is little solace in rewriting a man's philosophy in order to extricate him from his own contradictions. The real problems still remain. Of course, Whitehead did advance some thoughtful objections to traditional solutions of old problems. Unfortunately, his answers are, in all too many cases, so obscure as to be almost worthless. His main value seems to lie in his capacity to stimulate thought.

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I Was A Monk. By JOHN TETTEMER. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1951.
Pp. 281. \$3.50.

Professional anti-Catholics will find little comfort or ammunition in this sad, strange odyssey of a *quondam* Passionist. Although published as the "Autobiography of John Tettemer," it is rather difficult to ascertain just how much of this book is the work of John Tettemer. Editor Janet Mabie, the daughter of a minister, who worked with the advice and assistance of Tettemer's widow, fails to enlighten the reader on this very interesting point. She does, however, add a rather vacuous foreword by Jean Burden and also an introduction as vague as it is enthusiastic by John Burton. The general effect is to leave the reader with a feeling of sadness and pity for a man who lost his way.

The first thirteen chapters tell in a rambling but exceptionally friendly style the story of a youth whose background was typical of many another priest. John Tettemer's mother was a pious Irish Catholic; his father was a devout convert from Presbyterianism. His home life was a most happy one, since he grew up in an atmosphere of faith and friendliness. His brother became a diocesan priest. Hence when he asked permission to leave home to join the Passionists, nobody was very much surprised. On September 21, 1896, he pledged his vows after a difficult year of solitude, prayer, and strict monastic observance. He took the name of Ildephonsus of the Sorrowful Virgin.

After five years of study in this country and in Rome, he was ordained by Cardinal Respigli in the Cathedral of St. John Lateran on Sept. 21, 1901. He remained in Rome for three more years as a student priest, and then returned to the United States to enter upon a career that was unusual, meteoric. Four years passed, teaching and directing students. Recalled to Rome, he helped to organize and direct the new International College for

Passionist Students at the Monastery of Saints John and Paul. New experiences crowded the next five years. Having long since made his mark as a splendid student and teacher, he merited the distinction of serving as a consultor to two of the Congregations of the Holy See. When the time came for Fr. Ildephonsus to return home again, Pius X manifested his esteem and affection for him in a most paternal manner.

Soon after his return, he was elected rector of St. Francis Monastery, a new foundation at St. Paul, Kansas. From this office in 1914 he was elected to be one of the Consultors General, a highly important position. This new duty requiring residence in Rome, he returned there, and continued to charm all with his warm and gentle disposition; his ability and integrity were apparently unquestioned. Indeed, he refused a bishopric and he received more than gentle hints that a cardinal's hat was in the offing.

In the midst of this activity, sickness forced him to leave it all for the peace and quiet of a sanitarium in Switzerland. Here something happened. The long days of enforced idleness, spent in what he called detached contemplation, resulted according to him, in the birth of a new faculty of knowing, rendering all former knowledge false and illusory.

Soon he came to believe that the sense of "I" is a great illusion, since all consciousness is one. Losing one's own personality in that of a larger consciousness that he may call God seemed to him to be progress in the right direction. He felt the need of a long purgative training for philosophers and teachers in order to free them from the illusions of the senses and the mind, enabling them to function in the higher air of intelligence. The almost inevitable consequence of such a pattern of thought is familiar to every serious student of philosophy, and the result was no different in the case of Father Ildephonsus. A decision, therefore, was called for after these six months of detached contemplation. In making his fateful decision, he was forced to turn his back on human reason, human experience, and the teachings of the Church. He epitomized the tragedy of his confused mind in these words: "God is: I am not."

Obviously this picture painted for us by John Tettemer is neither clear nor complete. True, the colors in the foreground are soft and pleasing; sometimes they are highly flattering. There is an abundance of detail. The account of his boyhood, vocation, religious life, and priestly career has a deep nostalgic tone running through it all. There is no bitterness. He expresses great admiration and affection for his former religious brethren. There are no quarrels with superiors, no hidden scandals of monastic life to reveal. Certainly this is a strange book from the pen of a fallen-away, and a great disappointment to those who accuse the Church of being an enemy of reason.

It is the background of this picture that is obscure: there are too many

shadows. This is where the "artist" fails—and badly. The thoughtful reader wants to find out something about the literary and personal influences that caused this retreat from reason at Davos. John Tettemer mentions a few friends, but rather deliberately omits whatever might illuminate the background of this picture of his life. What influence, for example, did Baron Von Hugel have on him, if any? Did he help in any way to lead Von Hugel out of the maze of Modernism? What about his subsequent religious affiliations? His bishopric among the Liberal Catholics? His marriage?

Some few critics and reviewers of his book have sought to belittle John Tettemer's mental stature by snide remarks; one reviewer sought to trace his difficulty to the inadequacy of his training, referring to his early ordination as a case in point. The seminary training he received does not suffer by comparison with that of any diocesan or regular course of studies. Father Ildephonsus was a brilliant priest. This fact remains even though the volume in question does not give any indication that he ever mastered his Catholic sources. Yet granting this contention for the moment, how explain the defection of great minds like Tyrrell and Loisy? To point to his early ordination simply displays a lack of familiarity with privileges granted in exceptional cases for excellent reasons by the authority of the Holy See. Moreover, a book does not always mirror accurately the image of its author. Accordingly, this reviewer hesitates to give an appraisal of John Tettemer. Those who knew him and lived with him are the first to tell how kind and generous he was. When some former associates heard that his book was to be published, they remarked that any book by him would be a rather mild publication. They were right. He himself stated that he had everything to lose and nothing to gain when leaving the Passionist Congregation. He possessed the love and esteem of his brethren; he was well established in ecclesiastical circles. There was no woman in the background. It is difficult, therefore, to question his sincerity.

Nevertheless, if a reason must be found for this tragic flight from reason and the Faith, pride may be the answer. All through the book there is an abundance of the perpendicular pronoun. There is little reluctance about recording remarkable prowess in sports or in telling of the ease with which academic distinction was won. The flippancy with which he disposes of Plato and Aristotle, while at the same time elevating his own subjective opinions to the rank of objective truth, is another instance. The conversion of G. K. Chesterton he reduces to something akin to intellectual weariness. Such an attitude certainly smacks of intellectual smugness, if not pride.

Further, he displays little of the humility of the monk, else he might have heeded the solemn warning of St. Paul of the Cross in regard to intellectual novelties: "Let all the schools of the Congregation firmly

adhere to the unshaken doctrine of the Angelic Doctor, and let all the Lectors be strictly obliged to teach it." Submission to this point of the Rule might have helped John Tettemer to remain a good monk.

How far afield he wandered may be judged from his own lines: "What I have lost is, I feel, of no importance or consequence; the mere shell, the intellectual background or framework, which I know now was not the real foundation of my life as a monk, but rather scaffolding that could be removed without damaging the main structure. The scaffolding belonged to the illusory stage of life, seemingly essential while the need lasted, but forgotten when it was over." When the reviewer read these lines he could not help thinking of another scaffold, that of the Cross, upon which the Wisdom of the Father died, that there might be light and life for those sitting in sin and darkness. It is significant that all through these pages there is no mention of the shadow of the Cross falling upon his life. Could this be the answer?

To the very end his former religious brethren prayed for him. Their attitude remained that of the Man in the Gospel toward his Prodigal Son: They prayed that someday he might find his way home and once again clothe himself in the garment of Faith, receive the ring of God's grace, and sit down at the Banquet Table in his Father's House. Could it be that the mountain of pride kept him from finding his way home?

I WAS A MONK, therefore, must be classified as an unimportant book, one written by an unprofitable servant.

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BRIEF NOTICES

The Concept of the Diocesan Priesthood. By J. C. FENTON. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1951. Pp. 189. \$3.25.

Monsignor Fenton is in an especially authoritative position to discuss the nature and work of the diocesan priesthood. For many years he has been teaching and writing on Ecclesiology, a tract the adequate development of which demands clear perception of the role of the secular priest in the life of the Church. At the same time his teaching has been directed to seminarians from very many dioceses, a circumstance bound to impress any sensitive teacher with whatever deficiencies in the evaluation and appreciation of their vocation may be more usual or more dangerous among diocesan priests and seminarians. Very distinctly, Msgr. Fenton writes to correct such deficiencies.

The ten chapters fall roughly into three main sections: the nature of the diocesan vocation (chapters 1-3), the work of the diocesan priest (chapters 4-6), and his qualifications (chapters 7-10). Such is the unity of the work, however, that its intent is ultimately reducible to the single principle which the author uses as his starting-point; namely, that the full meaning of the diocesan priesthood is understandable only in terms of the *presbyterium*, the college, the body of priests gathered immediately under the head of the local Church (the Bishop) to assist him in the communication of the Christ-life to the local family of Christ.

Now in Catholic teaching only the Bishop has true and full membership in the College of Apostles. He in his own name has and exercises the three-fold Christ-given powers of the Church, viz. to teach, to sanctify, to rule. "The *presbyterium* is immediately subject to the bishop and it has no function other than to act as the instrument of the bishop in the liturgical, doctrinal and administrative direction of the diocese" (p. 20). This dignity of membership in a priestly body directly constructed around the bishop to aid him in the administration of the local church is the prerogative of the diocesan priest as such.

From this essential concept the nature of the diocesan priest's work follows easily. What is his special work? The work of the *presbyterium* is not specialized at all; that is the point (and in this again it differs from religious institutes)—its work is to assist the Bishop; and the Bishop's work is the totality of the Church's work in some true sense. Hence, while the work of this or that diocesan priest may be very specialized, the corporate *presbyterium* is not narrowed in its work to any one aspect of the Church's activity; and it is by the work of the *presbyterium* that the nature

of the diocesan priesthood is specified, somewhat as the special goal of an Order, and not the particular work of this or that member, specifies that Order.

The diocesan priest's ministry, then, has a unique universality; for the ministry of the *presbyterium* has a universality derived from that of the bishop's own plenitude of function. So, as a member of the *presbyterium* the diocesan priest's ministry is *doctrinal* (for the bishop is *par excellence* a teacher), *missionary* (for it must "build up" the body of Christ), *unitive* (in imitation of that Apostolic unity for which Christ prayed) and *perfective* of each member of the local Church. This very adequate consideration of the work of the diocesan priest (like the consideration of the nature of his vocation) is particularly impressive for the exalted yet very practical insistence on Charity as the subjective root whence all must flow. These two notions—the diocesan priest is a member of the *presbyterium*; the diocesan priest has an altogether special obligation to charity within the local Church (and outside it)—are immediately complementary, and Msgr. Fenton never fails boldly to draw their full implications. Very much worth while, too, is the insistent emphasis on the gravity of the diocesan priest's doctrinal obligations, and the nobility of his position as preacher and teacher of his people.

The whole fruit of this work is to be found in the last Chapters delineating something of the requirements which the diocesan vocation makes on a priest and candidate for the priesthood. Msgr. Fenton eliminates any confusion about the diocesan priesthood as a state of perfection in the technical sense of that phrase; but in a clear and strong fashion he indicates the need for extraordinary faith, hope, charity, and prayer in the soul of the diocesan priest together with unfailing obedience—of a distinct kind of course, since his vocation is distinct. The chapter on learning is impressive; but the special consideration on the Mass in the life of a diocesan priest is most powerful. Notably in this whole section, too, all the practical conclusions drawn rest upon the fact that the diocesan priest is a member of the *presbyterium*; here, then, is an outline of the requisites for true holiness in a priest whose vocation is precisely diocesan.

Most of the content of these ten chapters has appeared in various articles by the author in the *Ecclesiastical Review*. But they bear re-reading, and in any case it is in the gathering together at once of these various aspects of the diocesan priesthood, and their complete unification under the one dominant judgment—the diocesan priesthood is explicable in terms of the *presbyterium*—that the great value of this work consists. Its value is indeed great. Here in compact, readable, yet theologically exposed form is a Summa of the diocesan priesthood. The insight into the immense grandeur of that vocation is rather breath-taking; and the spirit of true and virile piety which speaks out with constant frankness lends practicality and strength to every page.

The Gifts of the Holy Ghost by John of St. Thomas. Trans. by DOMINIC HUGHES, O.P. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1951. Pp. 300, with index. \$3.75.

One of the brightest jewels in St. Thomas' theological crown is undoubtedly his treatment of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Refusing to consider for one moment any radical separation of the science of Ascetics and Mystics from that of Sacred Theology, his study of the virtues led him quite naturally to a consideration of the gifts in connection with them. He established two conclusions which were to prove of vital importance for the future development of christian spirituality, namely the fact that these gifts are necessary for salvation and also that they are essentially distinct from the virtues, although intimately connected with them and perfecting their action. Theologians prior to St. Thomas had already made attempts to solve this intricate problem, but their efforts had only led to greater confusion. It was left to the penetrating intellect of Aquinas to unravel the tangled skein of Tradition and to establish the true solution, based on cogent theological and metaphysical principles.

Basing his doctrine on the principle that habits are distinguished by their formal objects, St. Thomas outlines his solution in the *Commentary on the Sentences* and perfects it in the *Summa*. Although man's supernatural life is much more perfect in itself than his natural life, nevertheless he possesses this supernatural life less perfectly. If man is to be safe in his progress towards God, this basic imperfection must be removed and he must be brought to complete subjection to the movements of the First Cause. Supernatural though they be, the virtues still depend on human reason for their activity, while the gifts are directly subject to the divine action, thus perfecting man's response to operative grace by making him submissive to the inspirations of God.

In this brief review it is impossible to trace the effects of this solution throughout the history of christian spirituality—a history which includes the famous treatise on the gifts from the pen of John of St. Thomas. He may well be called the last of the great scholastics, heir to a magnificent tradition, with all the material at his disposal which had been laboriously gathered together by those who went before him. With his death at the age of 55, scholasticism entered upon a period of seeming decadence which was to last almost to our own times. Fittingly his last gift to posterity is this classical treatise on the gifts. It is also a sign of the renewed interest in the gifts which is characteristic of modern theology that at last a bold publisher should give to the English speaking world in book form a translation of that famous treatise which appeared originally in article form in *The Thomist* (1945-1946).

The importance of the subject matter alone justifies a warm welcome for

this book. Since the gifts lie at the very heart of all spirituality, those who write on the spiritual life will do well to study this treatise carefully. The translation has much to recommend it, owing to its smoothness and its faithfulness to the original thought even in the most difficult passages. From that point of view, Fr. Hughes has performed a difficult task with exceptional skill and judgment, for, if all translation is difficult, the task of rendering faithfully the highly complex thought of John of St. Thomas might well daunt the boldest.

Those who study this book—because it is not sufficient just to read it—will reap a rich harvest in many ways. The remarks on the gift of Piety in chap. VI, for example, have a special application in our modern civilization. The description of Charity in its relation to God and to creatures (p. 151, No. 57) expresses the very foundation of the christian spiritual life with a simplicity and sublimity unsurpassed even in the writings of the great mystics. For these and for other reasons it is to be hoped that no one will be put off by the thought of a formal treatise in the scholastic manner, because this book contains much that will be useful, not merely to the specialist and the theologian, but also to all who are trying to know and to love God better.

Ideas and Men. The Story of Western Thought. By CRANE BRINTON. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950. Pp. 587 with index. \$6.00.

America can boast of no outstanding philosopher of intellectual history—no one to compare with men like Toynbee, Spengler, and Dawson. Whatever interest our thinkers have taken in the past has not been accompanied by a corresponding measure of respect. Perhaps our culture is still too young to be conscious of any long and unbroken traditions; more accurately and in the spirit of James Truslow Adams' *Epic of America*, we have been too much engrossed by the economic and political progress of the passing day to become excited over our roots in distant centuries. Dewey, in his *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Northrop, in *The Meeting of East and West*, and Randall, in *The Making of the Modern Mind*, all essay something of an intellectual history. But all of them warp historical fact to fit their philosophical preconceptions. Brinton is different.

The present work is not intended to cover the same ground as the books of Toynbee or Spengler, and if it were, it covers ground at a different and much more popular level. Parts of the work are superlative, and perhaps that adjective could apply on the whole. It is certainly superior to any of the three other fairly contemporary American works mentioned above. The big flaw—and in the absolute sense there could be none bigger in a work of this sort—is the treatment of Judaeo-Christianity. Moses, for instance, is called "a shadowy and legendary figure to the mere historian."

(p. 100) Going on to Christianity, Brinton guards himself thus: "In this book, an attempt will be made to study Christianity from the outside, from a position that denies the *existence* (his italics) of the supernatural."

(p. 135) In fairness to the author, it should be pointed out that, as his context indicates, he is not attacking Christianity—in fact he later defends it; he wishes rather to take it out of the hands of historians and scientists, equipped to judge it only in terms of a specialized method. Thus, Brinton counters, "no Christian reader should have a moment's doubt: The core of Christian faith, the belief in the existence of the supernatural, the divine, is forever proof not merely against naturalistic and historical attacks, *but involves rejection of naturalistic and historical explanation* (his italics)."

What Brinton seems to be doing here is divorcing rather than distinguishing grace and nature, revelation and reason, faith and the motives of credibility. Such historical "purism," where faith becomes a kind of Tertullian absurdity, leads Brinton to cast doubt, as an historian, on the historicity of the Gospels and the divine claims of Christ, despite all the evidence marshalled by Catholic scholars, on both questions, since the days of Strauss and Harnack. Then too, there are other historical inaccuracies such as in the following statement: ". . . during the first three or four centuries with which we are here concerned, the Church had no single head on earth." (p. 151)

Brinton's bibliographical sections clearly indicate that he must not have read the literature about the origins of Christianity, written by sound historians of the Church. Nor does he take into account the element of tradition as a source of historical knowledge. If he applied the canons of criticism to other matters that he uses in regard to the historical origins of the Church, he would have to throw out practically every document that he consulted to write the book.

Yet despite these severe restrictions, the book remains, as was said above, a superlative work on the whole. There is a sympathetic treatment of the Middle Ages, a good discussion of rationalism, and some remarks on the Renaissance humanists. Surprisingly enough, beginning with the study of medieval ideas and ending with the present-day problem of a viable democracy, Brinton, the philosopher, is clearly and strongly sympathetic to the Christianity whose origins he questions, as an historian. He does not believe secularized democracy, socialism, nationalism, and the rest of what he terms modern "surrogates" for religion can achieve the good society. Though having an appeal to reformers wishing to revolutionize society, once established on their own, such modern "isms" cannot satisfy man's thirst for truth and his desire for happiness. Such doctrines, Brinton feels, cannot unite the historically struggling man with his lofty ambitions; they provide no ethical code that makes for the success of

democracy and the happiness of the democrats. To the reader of Brinton's work, Christianity appears as the moral in his story of western thought.

Except for the unfortunate aberrations on Christianity's beginnings, this is a sane and sober book that will be both a profitable and pleasurable adventure to Catholic philosophers. Neither too heavy with empirical detail nor too hasty with generalization (except as indicated above), Brinton has given us the best book on the history of western ideas yet to come from a native American pen. In general, he is complete without being confusing, balanced without being indifferent, critical without missing the good in what he condemns. His language is both lucid and lively.

There are fifteen chapters in the book; two on Greece; three on Christianity and the Middle Ages; one each on humanism, Protestantism, and rationalism; one on the eighteenth century; and two each on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the end of the book, there are two sections of annotated bibliography, dealing respectively with primary and secondary sources. In the selection of these works, the Catholic theologian and philosopher would find faults of commission and omission.

Natural Philosophy of Cause and Chance. By MAX BORN. New York: Oxford University Press, 1949. Pp. 233, with index. \$4.50.

The title of this book is somewhat misleading. The work is concerned with Born's analysis of the concepts of cause and chance as he has seen them develop in the growth of modern empiriological physics, and as such it is more properly a philosophy of science than a philosophy of nature. Even as a philosophy of science, it differs from the average book in this field; it presupposes a detailed knowledge of theoretical physics, and the author relies heavily on mathematical symbolism throughout his presentation. The result is a book that satisfies Born's demand for clarity, precision, and "aesthetic appeal," but will leave not a few natural philosophers wondering about the practical value of his contribution.

The main line of Max Born's thought centers around the notions of determinism, causality, antecedence, contiguity, and chance. The first four are defined early in the development, but the fifth is left undefined, as is the related concept of probability. Following an historico-logical outline, Born attributes the first mathematical, deterministic description of nature to Galileo and Kepler. Newton built on their foundations, generalized the laws of motion, and through a recognition of dependence in gravitational attraction, implicitly used the notion of causality. Because of the symmetry of his equations involving time, however, he overlooked the principle of antecedence (that the cause must be prior to, or at least simultaneous with, the effect), and also missed the principle of contiguity (that the cause and effect must be in a spatial contact) since his field theory

supposed to act through empty space. Cauchy and Maxwell improved the insight into nature with explicit introduction of contiguity in their theories of continuous media, but antecedence had to wait until the development of thermodynamics. In presenting the foundations of this science, Born eschews the classical analysis based on engineering notions in favor of Carathéodory's formulation of the basic laws; thus he is able to show how the advent of the principle of antecedence marked the end of descriptive method in physics, and prepared the way for new advances. These came through kinetic theory, with the introduction of chance and probability into the laws of motion. The complete integration of Born's five basic concepts is achieved in modern quantum mechanics, which dissolves the older, deterministic notions in favor of a broader interpretation permitting the interplay of causality and the "laws of chance."

The philosophical implication of this emergence of causality and probability as primary "metaphysical conceptions" is that it accentuates the necessity of dual aspects and complementary considerations in human knowledge. Born sees in this contribution a solution to numerous philosophical problems, particularly the problem of free will.

The evaluation of this work poses a problem for the philosopher-physicist. In the realm of theoretical physics, the book is all that could be expected of it, and more. It gives a remarkably lucid, complete review of current physical theories, shows their origins and interconnections, and supplies an adequate interpretation for the formalism of modern quantum mechanics. In this respect, it is a book worthy of the great theoretical physicist who wrote it. Yet in the philosophical domain, wherein will be found the audience to which Prof. Born specifically addresses himself, the work is a signal failure. The analysis of the concepts of cause and chance is skimpy; it lacks penetration and insight, as the author's knowledge gives evidence of being restricted only to the grosser aspects of material being. Causality is watered-down to the notion of extrinsic, physical dependence. The four-fold division of causality is missed (or perhaps dismissed) from the very outset, and this places the writer in a bad position to attempt an analysis of chance. In fact, he never does analyze either chance or probability, but simply accepts them with the observation: "I think chance is a more fundamental conception than causality" (p. 47). He prefers to speak of only one cause for each effect, being of the opinion that the 'number' of causes is a meaningless notion because, in a causal series, "the number of causes may be, and will be in general, infinite" (p. 129). And despite this, though his philosophical convictions be "not much more than common sense improved by sporadic reading" (p. 3), he yet feels confident in saying that "only in physics has a systematic attempt been made to use the notions of cause and chance in a way free from contradictions" (p. 1)! From such beginnings, we hardly need underline the illogic of Born's

attempt to urge the plausibility of free will or "interference of deity" from a study of the formalism of quantum mechanics.

There are one or two conclusions of Prof. Born, however, that substantiate the recent findings of such philosophers of science as Vincent Smith, Gavin Ardley, and others. One is that modern science is fundamentally in the realm of art. Scientists follow a "code of scientific rules" laid down by the masters, says Born, and what is more "there is no logical argument for doing so; it is a question of faith" (pp. 7, 209). Another is that symbolic logic, and in particular a three-valued logic such as Reichenbach offers, is powerless to solve the problems raised by quantum mechanics. "The problem is not one of logic or logistic," says the writer, "but of common sense" (p. 107). These conclusions we endorse; unfortunately there are not many such in the volume.

The Seed and the Glory. By MARY ELLEN EVANS. New York: McMullin, 1950. Pp. 250. \$3.00.

Samuel Charles Mazzuchelli, O.P., the youngest son of a patrician Milanese family was recruited for the American mission from the Dominican studium of Santa Sabina in Rome. After finishing his education for the priesthood in the United States, he was sent almost immediately upon ordination (Sept. 5, 1830) to Mackinac, Michigan, to begin an apostolate that has had few equals in the history of the Catholic Church in the United States.

In the course of his thirty-four years as a missionary to both Whites and Indians in the Northwest, the great Dominican, a controversial figure both in his own time and long after his death, proved himself not only an exceptional missionary but one of the most talented men ever to labor for the Church in this country. A summary of his life reads like one of the more improbable hagiographical legends.

Skilled in preaching and theological controversy, the little Italian was also a linguist, for he could preach fluently in four languages and he composed a catechism in the Winnebago dialect, the first such in any Sioux language; a writer, for he wrote a masterly volume of *Memoirs* on the American mission; an architect, for he designed the first Capitol of Iowa and a dozen churches. In addition to all this, the versatile Dominican was an educator who founded one of the first colleges in the Northwest. He was also a religious founder, who established the Dominican Province of St. Charles, which died shortly after its premature birth, and the Dominican Congregation of the Most Holy Rosary of Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, which lived and flourished.

The Seed and the Glory is the story of the life of this remarkable man,

the first full-length biography in English, and the first biography in any language of the colorful friar since Sister Rosemary's critical study of him in French for her doctoral dissertation. Truly this was a grand opportunity for a gifted writer, and Mary Ellen Evans who wrote this badly needed popular life came to her task peculiarly fitted for it. An ardent admirer of Father "Kelly" (as the Dubuque Irish called him) from her Dubuque childhood, Miss Evans, as a labor of love, followed the footsteps of the Dominican missionary wherever they led. *The Seed and the Glory* is the fruitful result of that research, although the complete lack of bibliography and footnoting gives no hint of the scholarship that went into the making of the book.

In the opinion of this reviewer, the novelesque métier chosen by Miss Evans to present her hero is the book's greatest weakness. Father Mazzuchelli is unbelievable enough without making him appear more so by giving his life a fictional cast. Notwithstanding this, the gigantic figure of the holy friar emerges clearly from her pages. The work, too, is unevenly written. Some of the writing is equal to any that has come from a contemporary pen, but there are spots where Miss Evans abandons her own style for a pseudo-Joycian, stream-of-consciousness mode that has a false ring and a nerve-racking effect on the reader. It is, in short, only a good book when it could have been and should have been a great one.

Questions de Cosmologie et de Physique chez Aristote et Saint Thomas. By JOSEPH DE TONQUÉDEC. Paris: Libraire Philosophique J. Vrin, 1950. Pp. 127 with index.

Much of the modern criticism that has been lodged against the physics of Aristotle and St. Thomas is traceable to an unsympathetic attitude towards their teachings, in turn prompted by a meager, insufficient knowledge as to why they taught what they did. Inexcusable though such scholarship may be, it is yet understandable how those conversant with modern physics might experience difficulty with the explanations of ancient and medieval physics, and perhaps the sin has not been so much on the part of the moderns, as on the part of the expositors of Aristotelian-Thomistic physics. Certainly there has been a quasi-void in the technical exposition of such works as *De Caelo et Mundo* and *Meteorologicorum*, or even in the popular presentation of the basic theories that underlie the Aristotelian physics of local motion.

Father de Tonquédec has not attempted a detailed, technical study of such matter in these *Questions*, but he has succeeded admirably in providing a readable exposition of three fundamental theories of Aristotle and St. Thomas. The major portion of his work is devoted to a description of the medieval theory of the world system, which included the Aristotelian

counterpart of the solar system as well as the "fixed" stars; supplementing this are two shorter treatises, one on the theories of light and color, the other on the theory of measurement. All three accounts are documented with numerous references and citations. However, the merit of the treatment does not lie so much in this, as in the fact that the author has taken pains to point out the common-sense observations that led to the adoption of these theories. Modern theoretical physicists might well disagree with the tentative explanations of Aristotle and St. Thomas; faced with the experimental knowledge of ages gone by, however, they cannot help but admire the genius of these men at having seen so much of the truth in such a paucity of data.

The author has made some telling points in noting parallels between Aristotelian and modern physics. Still he has not pushed this to excess, but has been content to note resemblances in conclusions rather than in methodology. Apart from the generally known similarity in the solar system (excepting the interchange of earth and sun), notable concordances are the interrelations of light and heat energies, the non-instantaneous transmission of light, the possibility of energy transformation, and some connections between diaphaneity and the quantum theory of light. Such observations may help in disposing the more contemptuous moderns towards a favorable hearing of the Stagyrte and his greatest commentator.

No exposition of the world system of Aquinas would be complete without a description of the role of the angels in the physical universe. To the author's credit, he has written eloquently and well on this subject. It seems to this reviewer, however, that he has concluded much too conservatively in saying (p. 56): ". . . nous pouvons penser, en général, que les Anges sont les ministres de Dieu pour ces commencements, ces dispositions originelles, ces impulsions premières d'où part le déterminisme scientifique, mais qu'il n'explique pas." This still concedes far too much to determinism, and relegates the angels to the order of subordinated causes *in essendo*, whereas it is the mind of the Angelic Doctor that they are causes *in causando* in the government of the universe. A similar concession to determinism seems to underlie the author's treatment of the quantity of sensible qualities, but unfortunately he does not go into the matter in sufficient detail to warrant a thorough analysis here.

These inaccuracies are matters of refinement, however, they detract little from the value of the work as a non-technical presentation of the basic theories of Aristotelian physics.

Against the Academics. By ST. AUGUSTINE. Transl. and annotated by John J. O'Meara. Ancient Christian Writers, 12. Westminster: The Newman Press, 1950. Pp. 219, with index. \$3.00.

The patristic collection in the English translation edited by J. Quasten and J. C. Plumpe is being received with praise by all the critics. It surely deserves such an acceptance, and the addition of this first philosophical dialogue of St. Augustine maintains undoubtedly the high standard of the series.

As customary with the Newman Press, the typographical presentation is perfect. The translation itself is clear, simple and generally accurate. We have noticed only one dubious translation: I, 1, 4, p. 39: "... mea vero et Alypii etiam VERBA lecturus es," rendered: "... you will read ... the THINGS said by Alypius and myself." Why not: "WORDS?" Would the discussion about the historicity of the dialogue have influenced the translator?

The Introduction and the notes are extensive and very scholarly: they suppose a good amount of research and a well digested erudition. The preliminary remarks and the numerous references concerning other works of St. Augustine, Cicero's *Academica* and Plato's dialogues are surely valuable, even if a reader might not subscribe to all the author's conclusions and inferences.

The Introduction gives, first, a succinct description of St. Augustine's life and intellectual evolution up to the time of composition of the dialogue. Then follows a brief identification of each of the interlocutors. This setting of the *milieu* will help the reader to an easier understanding of the dialogue.

As for the internal value of St. Augustine's refutation of the Skeptics, the author believes it to be very thin: "... they [the arguments] ... are, it must be said, of little value" (p. 17); "The *Contra Academicos* cannot be recommended as a valuable contribution to the theory of knowledge, not even as an answer to scepticism" (p. 18). We fear that this negative judgment so definitely formulated will not be accepted by all, by those at least who hold that St. Augustine has a certain value as a philosopher. For a good use of the *Contra Academicos*, see, for example, C. Boyer, *L'Idée de vérité dans la philosophie de saint Augustin*. Paris, 1936.

The question of historicity of the *Contra Academicos* is discussed at length and with skill (p. 23-32). The arguments *pro* and *contra* are clearly given according to the most accredited writers on this topic. The author's conclusion definitely favors the evidence against an absolute historicity, but recognizes that while "it is impossible to assess the extent to which fiction may have been employed. . . . It is evident that the element of fiction is far from being negligible" (p. 32). This prudent conclusion seems quite logical if we consider the previous argumentation as a whole, but

we doubt that "it is comparatively easy to dispose of the arguments" in favor of historicity (p. 27), and we think that the positive arguments against it are not so weighty as they appear to be. The first objection taken from the literary *genre* of the dialogue is, indeed, presented with a great number of references to different models (p. 28-30; notes to the Introduction (n. 148-162, p. 165-167). This erudition is praiseworthy, but if we must suppose that St. Augustine, as a rhetor, knew somehow the rules of a dialogue, nevertheless, we think it would be difficult to prove that he had access to all the quoted dialogues of Plato and other Greek works. From these similarities one can conclude to no more than a possible—or at the most, an indirect—influence. As to the second argument, based on "the change from the dialectical method of inquiry to what amounts to a formal lecture" (p. 30), the author could have taken into account the explanation proposed by H.-T. Marrou (in *S. Augustin et la fin de la culture antique*, Paris, 1938-1949, p. 310-315): that the first part of the dialogue is a dialectical exercise intended as such by St. Augustine for the formation of his pupils (*C. Acad.* I, 9, 25); the second part being the effective solution of the question by the teacher. This hypothesis which is not devoid of authority and value explains the apparent failure of St. Augustine's *Contra Academicos*, *De Ordine*, *De Beata vita*. But it supposes also that these dialogues are quite new in their *genre*, and that their claim to historicity does not lack foundation. To which extent are they historical? Who can tell, if the internal assurances of the dialogue are to be denied trustworthiness?

Kreuzeswissenschaft: Studie über Joannes de Cruce. By EDITH STEIN.
Louvain: Navwelaerts, 1950. Pp. 312.

Edith Stein was born at Breslau in 1891 of an orthodox Jewish family. She studied philosophy, mainly under E. Husserl, whose assistant she became. Her studies and the acquaintance with the works of St. Teresa of Avila led her to the Faith. In 1934 she entered the Carmelite convent at Cologne. From here she was transferred to the convent at Echt in Holland. She was arrested by the Germans in August 1942, and sent to Auschwitz where she was killed a few days later. Prior to her entrance in the order she had published several articles and a translation of St. Thomas' *De Veritate* in a modernized and highly readable form. During her years in the convent she finished a great work on ontology and almost completed the present book. The former, together with works published previously will be brought out as the other volumes of her works. The convent at Echt has been destroyed by bombs. But the manuscripts were recovered and edited by the archivist of the Husserl-Archives at Louvain and Rev. Romaeus Leuven, O. C. D.

The present volume contains the last work of E. Stein most of which exists in its final shape. The author was obviously occupied with finishing the book when she was taken away. The editors report on the state of the manuscripts and their editorial activity and add a short biographical note as well as an evaluation of the author's personality.

The book is divided into three parts: the Message of the Cross, the Doctrine of the Cross, and the unfinished essay on Following the Cross (*Kreuzesnachfolge*). It is mainly a penetrating commentary on the works of St. John for whom Dr. Stein had a particular admiration; in fact she took the name Sr. Teresia Benedicta a Cruce. This work is chiefly a commentary on the works of St. John whose doctrine is analyzed in the second part. (pp. 39-242) It is destined to render more clear the views of the Saint and to draw therefrom consequences for a deeper understanding of the fundamental notions, such as the "night." So as not to give rise to any erroneous interpretation, the author notes carefully in her preface the parts of her text which are not explanations of the doctrine but her own contributions. These latter are dependent on her conceptions of a more general nature to be exposed in the second volume of the works, *Finite and Eternal Being: Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*. In the present work, these statements are mostly in a chapter entitled "The Soul in the Realm of the Spirit and of the Spiritual Beings" (*Die Seele im Reich des Geistes und der Geister*), which is the second of the third section on "Death and Resurrection," the preceding dealing with the "night of the senses" and the "night of the spirit."

In view of the promised larger work, it seems perhaps unjust to analyze the ideas of Dr. Stein on the basis of the remarks made here. They refer to the problems of the ego or self and of liberty. One of the fundamental categories seems to be the opposition of inner and outer; there are things which have an inner and others which have only an outer. The soul pertains to the former and one has to distinguish within the soul an inner and an outer. (These rather clumsy terms are used to render the German *das Innere, das Aeussere* which are, perhaps, not quite covered by internal and external, or interior and exterior. These notions are, as the author indicates, related somehow to St. Augustine's views on the *homo interior et exterior*.) There is a correlation between the "weight" of outer things and the "depth" of the soul wherein these are received. In doing so, however, the soul need not abandon her deepest stand (*Standort*) because the soul, while dwelling in its deepest, has the freedom to move everywhere within itself. This is made possible by the fact that the soul has the "form of an ego." "The ego is that in the soul by which the soul possesses itself and which moves in the soul as in its proper space." (p. 142) Although living, or capable of living, in his deepest, man never becomes perfectly transparent to himself; this secret is revealed only by God if and when He so pleases. This view, too, is clearly reminiscent of St. Augustine. Though

never knowing itself wholly, the soul has the right of self-disposal. These ideas are correlated, by Dr. Stein, with those of St. Teresa in the *Interior Castle*.

The author devotes much space to a harmonization of the views of the two great Carmelite Saints and achieves in this regard, perhaps, a greater clarity than one finds in other such attempts.

On the whole, one has to do here with a work on mystical theology rather than on philosophy. For an appraisal of the author's philosophical conceptions one has to wait for the publication of the second volume. One may look forward to this other work with great expectations, since the author seems well qualified, both by virtue of her philosophical and phenomenological training and by her religious experience, to shed some new light on certain basic questions.

The present work should be of greatest interest to all students of the Carmelite mystics and of mystical theology in general.

Immortal Fire. By SISTER MARY JUST, O.P. St. Louis: Herder, 1950. Pp. 598. \$7.50.

In this "journey through the centuries with the missionary great" the author collects a number of biographies of great missionary figures, ranging from St. Patrick of Ireland to Father Donovan of Maryknoll. This is not a work of scholarship, most of the biographies are twice told tales, but it does collect into one volume a varied amount of inspirational reading, just the sort of book that should be on the good Catholic's bedside table. In addition to the biographical sketches, the pious authoress also attempts to recount, as background for her heroic characters, some of the Church's tremendous panorama of missionary history, based, for the most part, upon common secondary sources, but using some primary source material such as is found in *The Field Afar*. It is only to be expected that there would be some lack of focus in a work of such ambitious proportions, particularly one based almost entirely upon sources written in the English language.

De Principiis Naturae. By ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. Introduction and Critical Text by John J. Pauson. Fribourg and Louvain, 1950. Pp. 111, with indexes.

Under the moderation of I. M. Bochenski, the University of Fribourg is putting out a series of critical texts in philosophy. Pauson, an American, has done his introduction in English. This is an advantage for English-speaking readers since the bulk of the book is concerned with introductory remarks. Only twenty-five pages are needed for the critical text and half of each is occupied with footnotes.

As far as the technical quality of the work is concerned, the editor has

done a superb job. Much of the historical material and genealogy of texts will not interest the average reader. However, the section should not be ignored. Chapter Three, concerned with the historical and critical aspects, gives considerable useful information to the philosopher. For instance, Pauson puts the date of the work at 1252 or 1253. Further, he explains, briefly of course, the influences on the work from such thinkers as Boethius, Avicenna, and Averroes.

In the critical text of *De Principiis Naturae*, a sixfold division is given. This chapter arrangement, the work of Pauson, is a good one. Just a glance at the chapter headings indicates the scope of the work. The first is concerned with potency and act. In the second chapter matter, form, and privation are discussed. Then follow three chapters on the causes. Finally, there is a chapter on analogy.

St. Thomas shows in this very early work that same supreme ability he demonstrates so brilliantly in the *Summa*. He is crystal clear with the added perfection of brevity. *De Principiis Naturae* is a work to be read with profit by one who has finished natural philosophy and metaphysics. It would be too much to expect a neophyte in philosophy to comprehend its full significance.

One hopes that the work begun in this series at Fribourg will continue. It is an excellent contribution to scholarship. Its first volume helped clarify many textual difficulties concerning St. Thomas' teaching on the division of the sciences. The present work should have the additional value of gaining new readers for this small but valuable work of the Angelic Doctor on the principles of nature.

Footnotes for the Atom. By VINCENT EDWARD SMITH. Milwaukee: Bruce, 1951. Pp. 217. \$3.50.

Dr. Vincent Edward Smith has added another excellent book to his already distinguished library of works in philosophy and science. In *Footnotes for the Atom*, the Notre Dame professor has shown the way to make the atom but a footnote in the final redaction of the present page of human history. He has challenged Science, not as a dreamy arm-chair philosopher, but as one who knows Science, both its worth and its limitations. The fact that he also knows Aristotle and St. Thomas makes his criticism not worthless vituperation but valuable construction.

The thesis of the book is simple enough and repeated frequently. Empirio-logical physics is of proven value in its own field of operation; it is not, however, "a good guide for thought and life and society in the Atomic Age" (p. 16). Or again: "Physics can guide man in the control of matter and open new potencies to him for such ambitions. It cannot guide him in the control of self" (p. 41).

Of the eleven chapters of the book, the last nine are mainly philosophical.

Yet in all the chapters, Dr. Smith drives home one main point: empirio-logical physics is, by its very nature, designed to do just the opposite of what is needed by man to face the problems of daily living. It divides, separates, and considers outside influences. It ignores being, the unity and integrity of the creature and especially of man.

In many ways, *Footnotes for the Atom* is a book for meditation on man and his present plight in the modern world. Likewise it is a brilliant exposé of the shallow thinking and empty verbiage of modern non-metaphysical thinkers. "It is an anomaly that the war which was fought to conquer fear, as stated in the four freedoms, should have backfired with the terrifying blast of the atom bomb which has spread fear everywhere in the civilized world" (p. 131).

Dr. Smith's conclusion is that modern physics when taken as a philosophy "fails to return to man, and lacks the dynamism necessary to refresh, revitalize, and reassure itself" besides sowing the seeds of its own destruction (p. 199). The real answer to the world's woes will be found in a sound metaphysics and in the acceptance of Divine Revelation. Here is a book that scientists, statesmen, and teachers should especially read. It is a first class, professional job on the critical problems of modern man in science and philosophy.

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